

Fat or Fiction

Fats

First let me define the difference between Fats and Oils. Simply put, fats are solid at room temperature while oils are not.

The civilized world, through the power of marketing, has developed a “fat phobia.” This has unfortunately been a leading contributor to first an American epidemic that has now grown to a world epidemic of obesity and diseases related to obesity. Labels such as “No Fat,” “Low Fat,” “Low Cal,” “One Calorie,” have been the trend since the 1970’s. Just look where it has gotten us.

Lets back up to Anatomy 101...

Remember those cells that were dividing perfectly to form the trillions of cells that make up your body today? Well the outer lining or membrane of every cell in the body is made of lipids...aka...FATS! Therefore, FATS AND OILS ARE VITAL FOR HEALTHY CELLS and HEALTHY CELLS ARE VITAL FOR A HEALTHY BODY. So it is critical that we do not cut fats out of our diet. It is equally important to ingest good or healthy fats and oils. Avoiding fats all together is unhealthy. One it makes us fatter and two it makes us less healthy all the way down to the cellular level!

Now it is important for us to intake in our diet the RIGHT FATS AND OILS while avoiding the bad ones.

Good Fats and Oils

Personally, I wouldn’t cook with or eat anything but the following fats and oils: Virgin Olive Oil, Virgin Coconut Oil, and Regular Butter.

Olive Oil: Living in Europe for a couple of years, I found it interesting how at the grocery store they had an entire aisle in the store for certain foods, namely, alcohol, cheese, yogurts, and oils. That says a lot about the dietary ‘staples’ of the culture.

Here in the US we have entire aisles dedicated to dairy products, chips/snacks, candy/chocolate, and frozen dinners. Hmm!

Back to the oils...in the oil aisle there are countless brands of olive oil and virgin olive oil. It is used in everything! Best of all, it is dirt cheap. In the states, we have a number of cooking oils available; however, a tiny bottle of healthy olive oil costs a small fortune while a gallon bottle of hydrogenated vegetable oil full of deadly trans-fatty acids is quite affordable.

While living in Portugal, my family and I took a drive through the countryside of Spain. We passed through a number of beautiful olive tree orchards. “Wow,” I thought, “I wonder where America grows all the vegetables for the hydrogenated oils Americans typically use...you know the ones...vegetable oil, saffola oil, and the other ones available in one gallon to five gallon containers for home consumption...yup, the ones full of deadly trans-fatty acid. It is odd how those fatty acids that don’t even occur in nature, we have to make them ourselves by chemically altering a natural product. I wonder why they don’t do that here with olive oil. I wonder if that has anything to do with the catastrophic health problems in the US. Gosh, in the US we produce and ship hydrogenated oils all over the country slowly poison people to make a buck.” I brought my attention to the road but soon my thoughts wandered again... “Wow, olive oil is so healthy yet they continue to make it incredibly affordable here in Europe. In America it is \$8 for a tiny bottle of olive oil. Why do we charge so much for the healthy stuff and so little for the unhealthy stuff? Is there some great dark entity trying to make its millions of dollars at the expense of the health of America?” Then it hit me. There are several “Great Dark Entities” who thrive on making their millions at the expense of the health of our population.

Excerpts from Dr. Shetlin’s upcoming book, “Techniques For Advanced Living.”

The Next Trillion, a book by Paul Zane Pilzer, points out how we are making a shift away from “disease based health care” to a more “health and prevention” model. He also notes how for some time, we as a world population have been the systematic target of marketing gurus working for junk food and other sickness and obesity causing products. The real money has not been in “wellness” but in “sickness.” Thus we have junk-food and medication commercials bombarding our consciousness through TV, billboards, convenient stores, vending machines, etc. This is an entire topic in itself. For now, lets just get back to olive oil...

Olive oil's health benefits

- The beneficial health effects of olive oil are due to both its high content of monounsaturated [fatty acids](#) and its high content of antioxidative substances. Studies have shown that olive oil offers protection against [heart disease](#) by controlling LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels while raising HDL (the "good" cholesterol) levels. (1-3) No other naturally produced oil has as large an amount of monounsaturated as olive oil -mainly oleic acid.
- Olive oil is very well tolerated by the stomach. In fact, olive oil's protective function has a beneficial effect on ulcers and gastritis. Olive oil activates the secretion of bile and pancreatic hormones much more naturally than [prescribed drugs](#). Consequently, it lowers the incidence of [gallstone formation](#).
- Studies have shown that people who consumed 25 milliliters (mL) - about 2 tablespoons - of virgin olive oil daily for 1 week showed less oxidation of LDL cholesterol and higher levels of antioxidant compounds, particularly phenols, in the blood.(4)
- But while all types of olive oil are sources of monounsaturated fat, EXTRA VIRGIN olive oil, from the first pressing of the olives, contains higher levels of antioxidants, particularly [vitamin E](#) and phenols, because it is less processed.
- Olive oil is clearly one of the good oils, one of the [healing fats](#). Most people do quite well with it since it does not upset the critical omega 6 to omega 3 ratio and

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most of the fatty acids in olive oil are actually an omega-9 oil which is monounsaturated.

Generally, olive oil is extracted by pressing or crushing olives. Olive oil comes in different varieties, depending on the amount of processing involved. Varieties include:

Extra virgin - considered the best, least processed, comprising the oil from the first pressing of the olives.

Virgin - from the second pressing.

Pure - undergoes some processing, such as filtering and refining.

Extra light - undergoes considerable processing and only retains a very mild olive flavor.

When buying olive oil you will want to obtain a high quality EXTRA VIRGIN oil. The oil that comes from the first "pressing" of the olive, is extracted without using heat (a cold press) or chemicals, and has no "off" flavors is awarded "extra virgin" status. The less the olive oil is handled, the closer to its natural state, the better the oil. If the olive oil meets all the criteria, it can be designated as "extra virgin".

What is pure and light olive oil? "Pure" olive oil is made by adding a little extra virgin olive oil to refined olive oil. It is a lesser grade oil that is also labeled as just "olive oil" in the U.S.

Olive oil versus canola oil

Do not fall for the media hype which is put out by traditional medicine regarding the promotion of canola oil (rapeseed) as superior due to its concentration of monounsaturated fatty acids. Olive oil is far superior and has been around for thousands of years. Canola oil is a relatively recent development and the original crops were unfit for human consumption due to their high content of a dangerous fatty acid called erucic acid.

Ray Peat, Ph.D., a physiologist who has studied hormones and dietary fats since 1968, states, “The polyunsaturated fatty acids of vegetable seed oils (Canola, flax seed, soy, safflower, sunflower, and others) are the bane of human health.” They actually cause cancer, diabetes, obesity, aging, thrombosis, arthritis, and immunodeficiency. Their only appropriate use, he says, is as ingredients in paint and varnishes.ⁱ

If the taste of olive oil is a problem, or if you are frying or sautéing food, then you should consider [coconut oil](#). Many nutritionally misinformed people would consider this unwise due to coconut oil's nearly exclusive content of saturated fat. However, this is just not the case. Because it has mostly saturated fat, it is much less dangerous to heat. The heat will not tend to cause the oil to transition into dangerous [trans fatty acids](#).

Interestingly enough, cattle ranchers discovered the difference between saturated and unsaturated fats in the 1940s, when they fed their livestock inexpensive coconut oil (a saturated fat) in order to fatten them for market. But the cattle didn't gain weight. Instead coconut oil made them lean, active and hungry. Next, ranchers tested a thyroid-suppressing drug. As expected, the livestock gained weight on less food, but because the drug was strongly carcinogenic, it was discontinued. By the late 1940s, ranchers discovered that soybean and corn caused the same anti-thyroid effect as the thyroid-suppressing drug, allowing animals to gain more weight on less food. Since then, corn and soy have been the staples of feedlot cattle.⁷

Coconut Oil: Coconut oil has fantastic health and healing properties. Now there are different ways to process it some of which are toxic. That is why virgin coconut oil that has been processed from fresh coconut meat without chemicals or high heating is the way to go.

Coconut oil developed a bad reputation in the 50's but the assumptions were incorrect. It was simply mis-studied and mis-understood and categorized incorrectly with the bad fats and oils.

- Virgin coconut oil has anti-microbial and anti-viral properties.
- It has medium chain fatty acids (as apposed to unhealthy long chain fatty acids).*
- It has Lauric acid. This is one of the healthy ingredients of human breast milk.
- It is not damaged by heat because it contains no enzymes.
(remember coconuts can grow in climates naturally reaching over 130 degrees)
- It is loaded with healthy saturated fats.



*Coconut oil contains MCTs or medium chain triglycerides. Most vegetable oils are made of longer chain fatty acids, or triglycerides; often called LCTs for short. Here is an important note: LCTs are usually stored in body fat while MCTs are burned for energy. This is very important in metabolism and weight loss.ⁱⁱ

Bad fats and oils

Basically the vegetable seed oils, especially the hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, are extremely toxic to our bodies. Yes, they make for some golden crispy French fries, but when heated produce trans-fatty acids. Trans-fatty acids are not found in nature, they are a byproduct of a man-made or chemically altered oil. Our body does not know how to break them down and dispose of them in a healthy way. Thus, they alter our physiology in a harmful way. They are purely toxic. Yet through marketing and misinformation, these oils have become the “norm” in our diet. They are used in homes and restaurants throughout America and are spreading to other parts of the world.

Animal fats are better than the vegetable seed oils but still rank in the “bad fats and oils” category and should be used sparingly.

Man-made chemical compounds produced for their aesthetic qualities such as easy to spread with a knife equal BAD FATS. Margarine is awful! You are far better off using real butter, just watch your portions.

References for olive oil

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- 3.World Health Organization: Diet, nutrition, and the prevention of chronic diseases. Report of a WHO Study Group. WHO Technical Report Series 797, Geneva 1990
- (4) European Journal of Clinical Nutrition April 2002;56:114-120
- (5) Gut 2000;46:191-199.

ⁱ Unhealthy Vegetable Oils? Essay by CJ Puotineun

ⁱⁱ *Virgin Coconut Oil*, Brian & Marianita Jader Shilhavy 2005