

## Q. Why is olive oil good for you?

**A.** You've heard the advice before. Use olive oil when you cook, bake, make a salad dressing, or sauté vegetables. And stay away from vegetable oil and creamy sauces.

But what makes olive oil good for you?

### Olive oil is a healthy fat

Olive oil is a fat that comes from pressed olives. It's a healthy or good kind of fat also known as monounsaturated fat.<sup>1</sup> This type of fat has been linked to better health when compared to saturated or trans fats used in processed foods, pastries, and fast food.

In fact, research shows olive oil may help:<sup>2</sup>

- Prevent inflammation
- Lower the risk for stroke
- Protect against heart disease
- Support weight management
- Prevent age-related memory loss
- Control blood sugar levels
- Reduce the risk for certain types of cancer
- Lower blood pressure

Olive oil also contains healthy plant chemicals



called phytonutrients. These are the real health-boosting and disease-fighting parts of the oil.

**Virgin and extra-virgin olive oil** are thought to have the highest amounts of these good plant chemicals. Lower quality olive oils have less phytonutrients. Virgin and extra-virgin olive oils tend to cost more, but the quality is worth it.

### Olive oil and the Mediterranean diet

In one recent study, researchers found that people who follow the Mediterranean diet live longer and are 25-percent less likely to develop heart disease.<sup>3</sup>

The Mediterranean diet includes:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Legumes
- Fish
- Some dairy products
- Olive oil

## ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

### Add olive oil to your diet

Olive oil is good for you because it's a healthy fat. It's a better alternative to butter, lard, margarine, shortening, and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Use olive oil when you cook, bake, make a salad dressing, or sauté vegetables

You'll be healthier. Feel better. And live longer.

### References

1. Najt, C., et al. (2019). Lipid droplet-derived monounsaturated fatty acids traffic via PLIN5 to allosterically activate SIRT1. *Molecular Cell*, 77(4): 810-824. From: <https://tinyurl.com/b4dkna4k>
2. Gorzynik-Debicka, M., et al. (2018). Potential health benefits of olive oil and plant polyphenols. *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*, 19(3): 686. From: <https://tinyurl.com/4vdc3a5m>
3. Ahmad, S., et al. (2018). Assessment of risk factors and biomarkers associated with risk of cardiovascular disease among women consuming a Mediterranean Diet. *JAMA Network Open*, 1(8): e185708. From: <https://tinyurl.com/44ekknku>