



**MEDICAL BENEFITS
OF OLIVE OIL**

OLIVE OIL FALLS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN FOOD AND MEDICINE. Since ancient times, olives and olive oil have been used for food and to treat various diseases and maladies. Hippocrates was one of the first medical practitioners to record the health and therapeutic benefits of olive oil as a cure for mental illness, treatment for ulcers, healing of abrasions, for reducing muscular pain, and for soothing dry skin.

Modern science has validated these benefits and identified many more. Over the past few decades, many studies from researchers worldwide suggest that olive oil helps in the prevention of heart disease and cancer, promotes a healthy digestive system, reduces the effects of arthritis and offers protection against a host of other ailments.

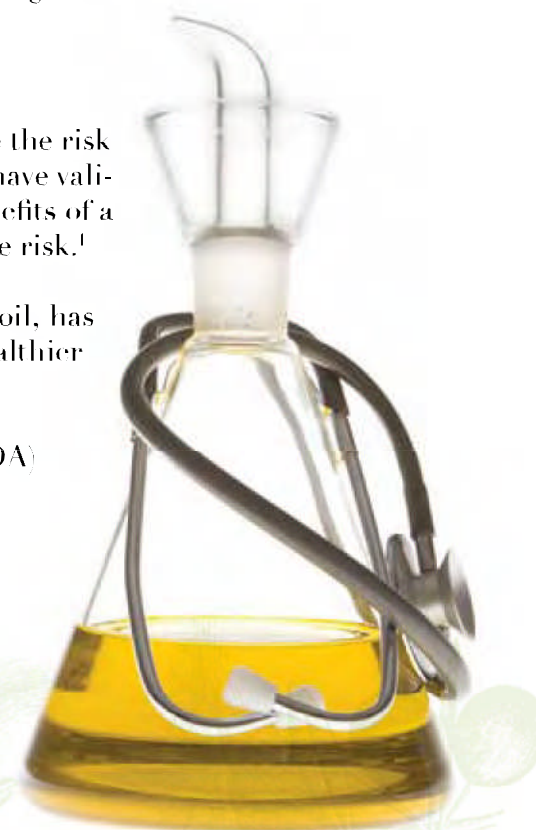
HEART DISEASE

A diet that replaces most fat with olive oil has been proven to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. In recent years, several important studies have validated these results. The *Lyon Diet Heart Study* demonstrated the benefits of a Mediterranean style diet to dramatically lower cardiovascular disease risk.¹

Olive oil with high phenolic content, particularly extra virgin olive oil, has anti-inflammatory and anti-clotting properties which result in healthier blood vessels and reduced cardiovascular disease.²

In November of 2004 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released the following statement:

Limited and not conclusive scientific evidence suggests that eating about 2 tablespoons (23 grams) of olive oil daily may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease due to the monounsaturated fat in olive oil.³



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

According to Professor Dimitrios Trichopoulos, author and consulting epidemiologist at the University of Athens, “olive oil intake is inversely associated with both systolic and diastolic blood pressure”⁴

A new study in the Journal of Nutrition states that “moderate intake of olive oil was successful in reducing the blood pressure of healthy men who don’t usually eat a Med-type diet.”⁵

In a study published in March 2000, Italian researchers concluded that by reducing fat intake combined with using extra virgin olive oil, patients were able to lower their antihypertensive medication.⁶

CHOLESTEROL

The two main forms of cholesterol are high density lipoproteins (HDL) and low density lipoproteins (LDL). Essentially the HDL is good, and LDL is bad. Olive oil has been proven to lower LDL and raise HDL, resulting in reduced chances of coronary heart disease.⁷

BREAST CANCER

Oleic acid in olive oil has been proven to protect women against certain types of breast cancer. In a study conducted at Northwestern University by Dr. Javier Menendez, “we were able to demonstrate that the main component of olive oil, oleic acid, is able to down-regulate the most important oncogene in breast cancer. The most important source of oleic acid is olive oil.”⁸

CANCER

In a recent study conducted in Europe, phenols in olive oil have been demonstrated to reduce leukemia cells.⁹ There are also numerous studies identifying the protective benefits of olive oil on skin cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer and other forms of cancer.

By examining the by-products of oxidation damage to cells, a precursor to cancer, in only three weeks researchers were able to significantly reduce the incidence of these compounds in patients who drank 25 ml of olive oil daily.

“Determining the health benefits of any particular food is challenging because it involves relatively large numbers of people over significant periods of time,” said lead investigator Henrik E. Poulsen, M.D. “In our study, we overcame these challenges by measuring how olive oil affected the oxidation of our genes, which is closely linked to development of disease. This approach allows us to determine if olive oil or any other food makes a difference. Our findings must be confirmed, but every piece of evidence so far points to olive oil being a healthy food. By the way, it also tastes great.”¹⁰

ARTHRITIS

Studies have proven that a Mediterranean diet with most fat coming from olive oil results in a “reduction of inflammatory activity, an increase in physical function, and improved vitality” for patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis.¹¹

CONCLUSION

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF OLIVE OIL have been proven repeatedly by scientists around the world. Conducting a search for olive oil health benefits will return hundreds of scholarly research articles on the subject. Only a very small sampling is included here. The irrefutable fact is simply that olive oil consumption makes you healthier and prevents disease. The purpose of this cookbook is to help people to integrate healthy olive oil into their cooking and baking, providing delicious and healthy desserts for their family and friends.