

Healthy Eating with Olive Oil

This leaflet is produced in conjunction with



Eating for pleasure, health and vitality



Healthy eating is all about tucking into plenty of the right foods and limiting the wrong ones – not depriving yourself of everything you enjoy. One of the most pleasurable ways of eating well is to follow the Mediterranean Diet.

The health benefits of eating the Mediterranean way have been written about at length, with much of the research pointing to lower rates of heart disease amongst people from the Mediterranean region that follow this traditional diet. But what exactly is it?

More a healthy way of eating than a “diet”, the Mediterranean Diet centres around foods from a rich variety of plant sources including fruit, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds and whole grains, such as breads, pasta and rice, with breads eaten without butter or margarine.

Underpinning the diet is olive oil, which plays a central healthy role in daily meals. It acts as the preferred and often sole source of essential fat, whilst flavouring and enhancing dishes.

Dairy products – primarily cheese and yoghurt – are eaten in low to moderate quantities, with meat, chicken and fish used sparingly.

Wine is usually drunk with meals – again in moderate quantities of one to two glasses per day.

Foods are eaten fresh where possible, or with minimum processing. This contrasts with the typical Western diet, which is high in processed foods containing substantial amounts of sugar and saturated fats, and high in meat and dairy foods – again laden with saturated fats.

Easy ways to look after your heart

- Keep alcohol consumption to a sensible level
- If you smoke, stop – or at least cut down
- Take a brisk 10-20 minute walk daily
- Set aside time each day to relax and unwind
- Aim to keep or reduce your weight to a recommended level
- Make the most of the wonderful flavours of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Healthy lifestyle changes are easy to stick to if you make them small and manageable



	Mild & Light Olive Oil	Olive Oil	Extra Virgin Olive Oil	Gusto Fruttato Olive Oil
Flavour	Light	Medium	Strong	Strong Peppery
Salad Dressings		●	●	●
Seasoning		●	●	●
Frying	●	●		
Baking	●	●		
Drizzling			●	●
Dipping Bread			●	●
Fish/White Meats	●	●	●	●
Red Meats			●	●

IMPORTANT: Always consult your doctor before starting any exercise or weight loss programme

Fats & Figures

Why the fuss about fats?

Fats ensure the absorption of certain fat-soluble vitamins and provide fatty acids, which are essential to life and growth. To remain healthy, we need moderate amounts of the right type of fats eaten as part of a good, balanced diet. So although excess fat can be harmful, too little fat can be detrimental as well.

Not all fats are created equal

Saturated fats are usually solid or semi solid at room temperature. These are strongly associated with risks to heart health. Main sources are dairy products, animal fats and tropical oils such as palm and coconut.

Polyunsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature, however they break down easily and require processing – sometimes chemically – in order to make them palatable.

Main sources are vegetable oils, apart from tropical oils such as coconut, palm and palm kernel oils.

Monounsaturated fats are also liquid at room temperature, with olive oil a prime example.

Along with high levels of 'good' HDL cholesterol (see below), olive oil contains an abundance of vitamins A and E, which help protect cells and tissues.

Trans fats are created when a hydrogenation process is applied to solidify oil for use in margarines or to improve a product's shelf life. This processing causes trans fats to act like saturated fats.

Until relatively recently, polyunsaturated fats have been recommended for a healthier diet, however many dieticians are now favouring monounsaturated fats, found in high levels in olive oil.

Fats and cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fat-soluble substance that is transported around the body through the blood by linking with fat and proteins to form lipoproteins.

These divide into Low Density Lipoproteins (LDLs) and High Density Lipoproteins (HDLs).

LDLs are considered 'bad' cholesterol as they tend to cling to artery walls and cause blockages, potentially leading to a heart attack or stroke.

HDLs, the 'good' cholesterol, remove excess cholesterol from artery walls and transport it back to the liver where it is excreted. High levels of HDLs in the body are linked to lower risk of heart disease.

10 ways to cut down on unhealthy fat

Small changes to the types and quantities of fat that you use in everyday eating and cooking can benefit your heart's health



01. Fried Eggs
Instead of using butter or lard, make delicious fried eggs by cooking in a little ultra mild, Mild & Light olive oil



02. Potato Wedges
Retain all the flavour and cut down on saturated fat by replacing vegetable oil or lard with Mild & Light olive oil



03. Chips
Chips deep-fried in Mild & Light olive oil absorb less oil making them crisper, lighter and healthier, with no greasiness

04. Sausages
Make delicious, succulent sausages with no oily residue by shallow frying in Mild & Light olive oil



05. Roast Vegetables
Just a small amount of Extra Virgin olive oil is all that's needed to bring out the flavour of roast vegetables



06. Mashed Potatoes
Keep saturated fat low and flavour high by mashing potatoes with Olive Oil or Extra Virgin olive oil instead of butter



07. Baked Potatoes
Drizzle a little Olive Oil or Extra Virgin olive oil over baked potatoes instead of butter for a healthier, nutritious dish



08. Sandwiches
Lightly drizzled Olive Oil or Extra Virgin olive oil make great substitutes for butter or margarine in sandwiches

09. Toasted Sandwich
A small amount of Olive Oil adds more flavour and less unhealthy fat to toasted sandwiches



10. New Potatoes
Instead of using butter or margarine, bring out all the flavour of new potatoes with a light sprinkle of Extra Virgin olive oil

