

How to Enhance the Heart-Health Benefits of Fish Oil

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Fish oil is rich in polyunsaturated omega-3 fats. These days, even mainstream medicine is heralding the health benefits that fish oil offers.

By adding omega-3 fats to your diet and supplement regimen, you're opening yourself up to a range of health benefits, including:

1. Healthier mood¹
2. Healthier brain function²
3. Healthier heart function³
4. Lower Systemic Inflammation⁴

Did you know that already? If so, you're off to a great start. But here's something you probably didn't know: you can actually enhance fish oil's heart health benefits by combining it with olive oil.

Olive Oil Boosts the Heart Benefits of Fish Oil

The latest scientific evidence shows that when consumed in combination, omega-3 fats and olive oil offer greater benefits than either nutrient alone.



In a study, scientists presented data regarding atherosclerosis prevention in pre-clinical, animal models. The Norwegian researchers studied animals with arterial plaques and administered a blend of marine omega-3 fats and extra virgin olive oil. The progression of atherosclerosis was the primary measurement they were interested in.

What they discovered was amazing: in the female animals, there was a **significant reduction** in the size of arterial plaques in the aorta and in the aortic arch. The male animals experienced significant reductions in the size of arterial plaques in the thoracic and abdominal aortas.⁵

The researchers concluded that a dietary combination of omega-3 fish oil and olive oil inhibited arterial plaque formation and progression in their animal model study.⁵

Finding the Right Olive Oil & Fish Oil Supplement

Does your fish oil supplement contain olive oil? If not, maybe you should consider one that does. Look for a combination product that includes the concentrated antioxidants found naturally in olive oil, called polyphenols. These are the powerful plant-based antioxidants that give olive oil its beneficial properties.

Look on the back label and make sure the olive fruit extract breaks-down similar to this:

- 6-7% polyphenols
- 1-2% hydroxytyrosol
- 0.5% oleuropein

Yes, Include Olive Oil in Your Daily Diet

Remember, supplements are designed to supplement the food that you eat. So, regardless of your own personal regimen, you should still try to include olive oil in your daily diet.

However, choosing an olive oil can be confusing within itself. There are many variables that go into olive oil production which can yield dramatic differences in terms of quality, including color, aroma, and flavor.

The overall quality of olive oil is determined by its acidity — the more acidic it is, the lower the quality. Here's a quick summary of the different types available:

1. **Refined Olive Oil** – this is the oil that comes from the second and third pressing of the olives. It contains not only the oil, but also olive juice which is very acidic. It's usually too acidic for human consumption and has to be further "refined" with heat and/or chemicals in order for it to be sold in grocery stores. The refined olive oil tends to be the cheapest and lowest quality. It's okay for flavoring meats, fish or poultry, but not so good as a dressing or a dip. Food that says, "Packaged in olive oil," typically uses refined oil.
2. **Semifine Virgin Olive Oil** – this is acidic oil that is left over after the first press but is not refined. It's very bitter tasting when uncooked, but tends to be okay when cooked. This is also considered low quality.
3. **Virgin Olive Oil** – this is the oil from the first press of the olive. It contains no olive juice, only the oils. Its overall acidity is low, but it tastes best cooked.
4. **Extra Virgin Olive Oil** – this is lower in acidity than virgin olive oil. The lower acidity gives it a fruity taste and deeper aroma and color. It's good cooked or uncooked and can be used confidently in salad dressings.
5. **Premium Extra Virgin Olive Oil** – this olive oil is the lowest in acidity and has the best flavor. It tastes great uncooked, makes for the best dressings, and can also serve as a great dip for bread.

REFERENCES

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