

Contribution to Child Development

Due to the linoleic acid (omega-6 fatty acid) contained in olives and olive oil, these are a most healthy food for newborn babies and growing children. A deficiency in linoleic acid leads to the emergence of a retardation of development in infancy and various skin disorders.

Olive oil contains anti-oxidant elements that prevent the destructive effects of harmful substances in our bodies, and fatty acids of great importance to human health. These support the hormones and assist in cell membrane formation. Olive oil possesses a balanced polyunsaturated compound at a similar level to that in human milk. Olive oil is a sufficient source of these fatty acids, which cannot be obtained from the human body but which are of the most essential importance to it. These factors make olive oil very important for new-born babies.

Since it contributes to the natural development of the baby's brain and nervous system before and after birth, olive oil is the only oil recommended for mothers by experts. As well as containing similar levels of linoleic acid to those of mother's milk, when olive oil is added to fatless cow's milk, it becomes as natural a food source as mother's milk itself.

Blood Pressure Reduction

Medicines to reduce high blood pressure are also made from olive leaves.

Benefits for the Internal Organs

Olive oil protects the stomach against diseases such as gastritis and ulcers by reducing gastric acid levels. By activating the bile, it makes it perfect. It regulates the discharge of the gall bladder and reduces the risk of bile stone formation. Moreover, thanks to the chloride it contains, it also assists the functioning of the liver and thus helps the body eliminate waste products. In addition, it also has a beneficial effect on the brain arteries.

On account of all these properties, olive oil has attracted considerable expert attention in recent years. Comments made by experts are as follows:

Jean Carper, an authority in the field of health & nutrition, the CNN award-winning correspondent, columnist & author of *The Food Pharmacy & Food – Your Miracle Medicine*: New

Italian research finds olive oil contains antioxidants...that combat disease processes, including LDL cholesterol's ability to clog arteries.

Pat Baird, a dietician and nutrition consultant: I love the whole idea of olive oil's versatility... the more we know about it, the more we learn about its great contribution to good health.

Dr. Dimitrios Trichopoulos, chairman of the Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Uni of Public Health: Women might experience as much as a 50% reduction in breast cancer risk if they consumed more olive oil in place of saturated fats. Olive oil has a protective effect against some types of malignant tumors: prostate, breast, colon, squamous cell & oesophageal.

Bruno Berra of the Institute of General Physiology & Biological Chemistry, Uni of Milan: The minor polar components of virgin olive oil increase significantly the resistance of LDL to oxidation.

Rivellese, Riccardi & Mancini of the Institute of Internal Medicine & Metabolic Diseases at Federico II Uni, Naples: Olive oil prevents insulin resistance & ensures better control of the glucose in the blood.

In a study of the major antioxidants in olive oil, Portuguese researchers showed that one, DHPEA-EDA, protects red blood cells from damage more than any other component. "These findings provide the scientific basis for the clear health benefits that have been seen in people who have olive oil in their diet," said lead researcher Fatima Paiva-Martins of the University of Porto.

Heart disease is caused partly by reactive oxygen, including free radicals, acting on LDL or "bad" cholesterol & resulting in hardening of the arteries, researchers said. Red blood cells are particularly susceptible to oxidative damage because they are the body's oxygen carriers.

Frank Sacks of the Harvard School of Public Health: An olive-oil-rich diet is more effective than a low-fat diet in controlling & treating obesity. Moreover, it leads to longer-lasting weight loss & it is easier to keep to.

The benefits of the olive plant, emphasised by Allah in verses of the Quran, have been discovered in parallel to the advances made by medical science.

It is He Who sends down water from the sky. From it you drink & from it come the shrubs among which you graze your herds. And by it He makes crops grow for you and olives, dates, grapes & fruit of every kind. There is certainly a Sign in that for people who reflect. 16:10-11

Prepared by: Zamals Software Co.

6 Dowding St. Kitty; 225-9031; zsc@networksgy.com

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Sacred, Auspicious,
Providing Countless Blessings

A

ttention is drawn to
the oil of the olive
tree in these terms
in the Quran:

God is the Light of the heavens
& the earth. The metaphor of His
Light is that of a niche in which is
a lamp, the lamp inside a glass,
the glass like a brilliant star, lit
from a blessed tree, an olive,
neither of the east nor of the
west, its oil all but giving off light
even if no fire touches it. Light
upon Light. God guides to His
Light whoever He wills & God
makes metaphors for mankind
& God has knowledge
of all things. (Quran, 24:35)

God swears an oath by the olive, saying, “By the fig & the **olive**, and by Mount Sinai, and by this secure city, surely, We have made man in the finest order.” (Quran 95:1-4) Prophet Muhammad (p) said, “**Anoint yourselves with olive oil because it comes from a blessed tree.**”

The olive tree is remarkable as well, with an extraordinary underground root system that can extend over twenty feet, enabling it to draw water from deep within the earth and produce olives continuously for hundreds of years. The olive tree has always been considered a blessed tree by the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity & Islam. Adherents of all three religions have traditionally used its wood to make prayer beads. There are numerous references to the olive in their sacred texts. In the Torah (book of Deuteronomy), Prophet Moses (p) describes Palestine as a “good land, a land of olives.” The book of Genesis says that, after the Flood, a dove brought an olive branch to the Prophet Noah (p) as a sign that land was near. According to the Psalms, a man’s children are like “the slips of olive trees.” The Prophet Jesus (p) also made references to the olive tree. Research in recent years has revealed that the olive is not just a delicious food but also represents an important source of good health. In addition to the olive itself, olive oil is also an important source of nutrition.

The expression “*mubarakatin zaytoonatin*” in the Quranic verse describes the olive as being “plentiful, sacred, auspicious, providing countless blessings.” Olive oil, referred to in the term “*zaytuna*,” is known as one of the most highly recommended types of oil, especially for coronary & arterial health.

Benefits for Coronary & Arterial Health:

Most of the fatty acids in olives and olive oil are mono-unsaturated. Mono-unsaturated fatty acids do not contain cholesterol. Therefore, olive oil does not raise cholesterol levels but instead keeps them under control. Olive oil also contains omega-6 linoleic acid (EFA: essential fatty acid), which is essential for the human body. Due to this feature,

health-related bodies (such as The World Health Organization) recommend that at least 30% of the fatty acid consumed in societies in which hardened artery and diabetes levels are high should consist of omega-6. This increases the importance of the olive still further.

Studies in this area have revealed much lower LDL (bad cholesterol) and higher antioxidant levels in people who consume 25 millilitres (about two spoonfuls) of natural olive oil a day for one week. Antioxidants are important as they neutralise the harmful substances in the body known as free radicals and prevent cell damage. It has also been established in a great many studies that the consumption of olive oil reduces cholesterol levels and prevents heart disease.

Olive oil is also recommended for patients with heart and artery disease since it reduces the level of harmful cholesterol (LDL) in the bloodstream and raises that of useful cholesterol (HDL). In countries with high occurrences of heart and artery diseases, saturated fats with high cholesterol content are generally consumed.

In addition, olive oil does not disrupt the proportion of omega-6 to that of omega-3. It is very important that omega-3 and omega-6 be present in the body at specific levels because any imbalance in these proportions can lead to progression in many diseases, especially those of the heart and immune system and cancer. For all these reasons, many people enjoy good health thanks to olive oil. The American Heart Association suggests that in order to reduce the risk of heart disease high mono-unsaturated fats can be an alternative to a 30% reduced fat diet.

Cancer Prevention

A study published by The Archives of Internal Medicine, showed that women who consume high levels of mono-unsaturated fat have a lower risk of developing breast cancer. Scientists at the University at Buffalo, demonstrated that b-sitosterol, a fat found in vegetable oils such as olive oil, helps prevent the formation of prostate cancer cells. The researchers concluded that b-sitosterol strengthens the internal communication system of the cell that issues the command for the cells to divide and that cancer can thus be prevented before cell division reaches an uncontrollable level.

A recent study by doctors at the University of

Oxford has shown that olive oil has a protective effect against intestinal cancer. The doctors discovered that olive oil enters into a reaction with stomach acid in order to prevent intestinal cancer from beginning. At the same time, the University of Oxford researchers also established that olive oil reduces the level of bile and raises that of DAO (the enzyme diamine oxidase), thus protecting against abnormal cell growth and cancer.

Prevention of Arthritis

According to researchers’ reports, people who consume large quantities of olive oil and cooked vegetables can have a reduced risk of rheumatic arthritis, a chronic inflammatory disease of the joints.

Assists Bone Development

The vitamins E, A, D and K contained in olive oil are important from the point of view of assisting bone development in adults and children, and in strengthening the bones by fixing calcium. It is also recommended for the elderly as it is easily digested and through its minerals, it assists with the use of vitamins in the body. It prevents calcium loss by stimulating bone mineralisation. Bones are the organism's mineral structure storehouses and an absence of mineral accumulation in the bones can lead to serious complications such as bone softening. Olive oil has a beneficial effect on the skeleton.

Prevention of Aging

Since the vitamins contained in olive oil have a cell renewing effect they are also employed in the treatment of the elderly, as well as nourishing and protecting the skin. As foodstuffs are transformed into energy in our bodies, certain substances known as oxidants are formed. With the high levels of anti-oxidants it contains, olive oil prevents damage by harmful substances, renews our cells and delays aging in the tissues and organs. Olive oil is also rich in vitamin E, which suppresses the free radicals that destroy the cells in our bodies and cause aging.

**And an olive tree which emerges from the mount of Sinai,
it gives oil & is a relish for those who eat.**

Quran: 23:20