Difference between olive oil and corn oil [1]

Alice,

What are the advantages/disadvantages of using olive oil instead of corn oil in terms of fat content, cholesterol, etc.?

?Three-in-one

Answer

Dear Three-in-one,

There is a bit of debate about the pros and cons of olive oil vs corn oil. Some newer research suggests when included in a well-balanced diet, corn oil may have comparable or possibly greater, health benefits when juxtaposed with olive oil. Both corn and olive oil are made up of mostly unsaturated fats. Monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats are often described as ?healthy fats?. Research suggests that these two types of fatty acids may help lower cholesterol, normalize blood clotting, and also possibly improve insulin and blood sugar levels ? and they are healthier choices to cooking with butter or lard. Good vs. bad fats [2] can provide some more detailed information about the different types of fat found in food.

Olive oil has a higher percentage of monounsaturated fats when compared to corn oil. The exact ratios are as follows:

- Corn oil: 59% polyunsaturated 24% monounsaturated 13% saturated, which give a 6.4:1 unsaturated/saturated fat ratio
- Olive oil: 9% polyunsaturated 72% monounsaturated 14% saturated, which gives a 5.8:1 unsaturated/saturated fat ratio

For quite some time monounsaturated fats were credited with lessening the hardening of arterial walls and thus reducing risks of heart and kidney disease. Recent clinical studies seem to lean more heavily towards the positive impact of polyunsaturated fats over monounsaturated fats in protecting against heart disease.

Also of note when cooking with oils, corn oil tends to be more stable at higher heats, whereas olive oil is more stable at lower heats and tends to burn at high heats. So, depending on your recipe, one may be more suitable on the stove than the other.

Olive oil also has the most nutritional value when it is freshest, according to researchers. As
soon as olive oil is exposed to air and light it begins to degrade and lose its heart-healthy benefits. While many of us are accustomed to expiration dates on bottles and cans, olive oil can also have both an expiration date and a harvest date? checking for those is advised by industry leaders. Olive oil enthusiasts and experts suggest using oil within about six months of harvest, if possible. When you store olive oil between uses, try to keep it in a cool environment away from light.

When shopping for corn oil, some consumers may be concerned with finding sources that are free of genetically modified organisms (or GMO-free). Corn is one of a handful of crops that are more likely to be genetically engineered than others. To learn more about GMO debate, check out GMO?s ? okay for consumption? [3]

While the existing research on olive and corn oil has certainly shaped nutritional recommendations we may have heard for years, it?s also worth noting that even clinical studies have limitations. And just like the evolving understanding of monounsaturated fatty acids vs. polyunsaturated fatty acids, what we know about olive oil and corn oil today may evolve with new research and deeper understandings of how these oils play a role in our bodies and health.

Perhaps equally if not more important than the type of oil itself, is what you are sautéing, dressing, or marinating. Eating a well-balanced diet in addition to choosing dishes and snacks with healthy fats may make the bigger impact on overall health. Some research suggests that diets with an emphasis on vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains (and less emphasis on meat, poultry, and dairy) when partnered with healthier fats from sources like nuts, corn oil, and olive oil can promote heart health and lower cholesterol.

If you are looking for more individualized advice on diet and nutrition, you may want to speak with a registered dietician, or a health care provider. You can also access nutritional information through Alice! Health Promotion Nutrition Initiatives [4].

Here?s to good eating and good health!

Alice!
Category:
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