



Plenty of options to replace olive oil

What kind of oil is the best to use for heart health? I tend to use olive oil all the time, but I've been looking for alternatives.

Many consumers wonder about olive oil these days, ever since a 2007 article in *The New Yorker* revealed that much olive oil sold worldwide as "extra virgin" doesn't meet that designation's premium-grade standard, having been mixed with other types of oil. The report was corroborated in 2010 when the University of California-Davis reported that 69 percent of imported olive oil it tested didn't meet the standard.

Although questions about quality and truth-in-labeling remain (for details, see <http://www.truthinoliveoil.com/>), olive oil remains a heart-healthy option. Most types of oil normally used for cooking are high in unsaturated fats, the type considered to be heart-healthy when used in moderation and when used instead of saturated or trans fats.

There are two types of unsaturated fats — monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. The American Heart Association doesn't advocate one type over the other. Both can help reduce blood cholesterol levels, which helps reduce the risk of heart disease.

Oils highest in unsaturated fats (in order) are safflower, canola, flaxseed, sunflower, corn, olive, sesame and soybean oil. Peanut oil and

cottonseed oil actually contain a bit more saturated fat than what you'd find in regular margarine.

On the other hand, both coconut oil and palm kernel oil have very little unsaturated fat. In fact, they have more saturated fat per tablespoon than butter, and palm oil isn't far behind. If you're looking for heart-healthy oils, avoid the tropical types.

Monounsaturated fats tend to be good sources of vitamin E, which most Americans don't get enough of. Oils highest in monounsaturated fats include safflower, olive and canola.

Polyunsaturated fats are good sources of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. Most Americans don't get enough omega-3s. Oils commonly used in cooking that have a good amount of omega-3s include soybean and canola.

It's important to note that despite their heart-healthy traits, you shouldn't overdo it on oils. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that most adults limit oils to 5 to 7 teaspoons a day. That includes oils in all foods, including nuts, peanut butter, olives, high-fat fish such as salmon or trout, avocados, mayonnaise and salad dressings, and margarine.

For more guidance on oils and fats in the diet, see the dietary guidelines website at <http://choosemyplate.gov>.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to *Chow Line*, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.



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