

## Research shows that fresh, high-antioxidant Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) is healthy, but what are those health benefits and how do you choose an oil in the store?



**What is EVOO?** Unlike pure, light, and extra-light olive oils which are refined and use chemicals or heat for extraction, EVOO is made by simply crushing the olives. This first crush is called EVOO— you can think of it as the juice of the olive: the fresher, the better!

**What are the health benefits?** EVOO made with fresh, early harvest olives is packed with health promoting compounds called phenols that protect the oil. These phenols also protect us! They have antioxidant (fights damage to cells), antimicrobial (prevents harmful invaders), and anti-inflammatory (reduces inflammation) properties.<sup>1</sup> Additional benefits are shown through EVOO's main role in the Mediterranean diet, which has been shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, heart attack, cancer, and diabetes along with other chronic diseases.<sup>2</sup>

### **How do I find a fresh EVOO year-round?**

Like wine, many countries produce fantastic olive oil! Since the Northern and Southern hemispheres have opposite growing seasons,

there's a fresh harvest of EVOO every 6 months from countries such as Spain, Portugal, USA, and Greece in the North, and Chile and Australia in the South. Look for the crush date of your olive oil rather than the best-before-date and aim for one that is no more than one year old.

### **What happens if my EVOO is old?**

All un-refined oils will degrade over time, causing rancidity (smells like 'old lipstick/ crayons') and lowered health benefits. A step you can take to combat this is to look for EVOO in a dark colored bottle and store it in a cool, dark cupboard away from the stove.

**Can I cook with EVOO?** Yes! You can sauté, fry, roast, and bake with EVOO! Recent research has shown fresh, high-antioxidant EVOO to be the most stable oil when heated compared to other common cooking oils.<sup>3</sup>

For additional resources, please visit: <https://olivewellnessinstitute.org/>

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### References

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