



NATURAL NUTRITION:  
GRAPSEED OIL: A GIFT FROM THE HEART FOR THE HEART  
BY BETTY KAMEN, PH.D.

When I handed my hosts the pretty bottle of Salute Sante©! they smiled and said, "How nice! A small bottle of wine!" "No," I responded, "It's grapeseed oil." I ignored their attempts to conceal disappointment and gave them the rest of their holiday gift: a sheet of recipes with a note, reading, "From my heart for your heart!"

Any health researcher will say that it's hard to find a product, especially an every day household oil, that raises HDL (good cholesterol) and lowers LDL (bad cholesterol). Grapeseed oil, new on the American scene, does just that.

What better time of the year to use such a culinary aid? This is the season people throw caution to the wind at the holiday table and consume foods they may try to avoid the rest of the year. With grapeseed oil, holiday treats need not place people at risk for cholesterol calamity.

STUDIES PROVE GRAPSEED OIL'S BENEFICIAL HDL EFFECT

Dr. David Nash, research cardiologist at the State University of New York Health Science Center in Syracuse, published a study revealing the beneficial HDL effect of grapeseed oil. The research shows just one ounce daily is all that is necessary for this beneficial outcome. Within two weeks there was a 13 percent to 14 percent increase in HDL. (Journal of Arteriosclerosis, 1990; 10:5)

According to both the Helsinki and Framingham Heart Studies, performed on thousands of patients over several years, cardiac events decrease as much as 3 percent to 4 percent for each percentage increase in HDL. This translates to a significant 39 percent to 56 percent decrease in risk of cardiovascular disease. (Drugs, 1990; 40 (1) 13-8)

A second report confirmed Nash's findings, adding that grapeseed oil reduced LDL in just three weeks. (Journal of American College of Cardiology, March 14-18, 1993)

According to current knowledge, grapeseed oil, a high linoleic product, is the only food known to raise HDL and lower LDL. Linoleic acid is one of two essential fatty acids people cannot manufacture themselves. Linoleic acid is an Omega 6 fatty acid. Studies indicate that linoleic is sadly deficient in most diets.

Grapeseed oil is 76 percent linoleic acid. Interestingly, low levels of HDL are also related to impotence. In fact, the results of the Massachusetts Male Aging study show that as HDL levels decrease, the probability of impotence increases. (The Journal of Urology, Vol. 151, 54-61, Jan. 1994)

Grapeseed oil also:

- Reduces platelet aggregation (i.e., prevents cells from sticking together, initiating processes leading to heart disease)
- Helps to prevent hypertension caused by sodium excess
- Helps to normalize lesions occurring from obesity and diabetes
- Is ecologically sound because it is made from grape seeds after the wine pressings. (Nutrition Reviews, 1977;35: 1; Nature, 1976; 283:633)

HOW TO COOK WITH GRAPSEED OIL

Grapeseed oil is now available for all forms of cooking and is also ideal for salad dressings and mayonnaise. It has no fatty aftertaste and enhances the flavor of food, so it can be used for anything from a tuna salad to delicate party preparations. It has a non-greasy, slightly nutty flavor and will not cloud when chilled. The recommended regular or deep frying temperature is 360/4F. At this temperature, there is no smoking, splattering, nor burnt taste because the smoke point of grapeseed oil is unusually high (over 485/4F) unlike the much lower smoke point temperatures of other oils. Keeping the temperature at the normal range also prevents conversion to harmful trans fatty acids, as does not reusing the oil again. This is a major advantage over other oils.

Breaking a vitamin E capsule into stored oil is unnecessary with grapeseed oil because it is naturally high in this vitamin. The presence of vitamin E graces grapeseed oil with a shelf life of at least two years. For the same reason, maximum benefit can be obtained by using grapeseed oil raw.

Wouldn't it be great if commercial food manufacturers switched to grapeseed oil instead of the frequently used products laden with trans fatty acids, designed for profit rather than health? Finally, chips, popcorn treats and even baked goods would be healthy. Meanwhile, Happy Holidays and Salute Santé!

*Betty Kamen is an award-winning photojournalist with graduate degrees in psychology and nutrition education. She has written many books, the latest of which is Hormone Replacement Therapy, Yes or No: How to Make an Informed Decision. For additional recipes or information on Kamen's educational tapes and books, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Nutrition, P.O. Box 5847, Bel Marin Keys, CA 94948.*