

Fresh oil olive has the most health benefits

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

The Mediterranean diet is a pattern of eating that lately has become a darling of medical researchers. It includes vegetables and grains, not so much meat, and, of course, generous portions of olive oil.

Mary Flynn, an associate professor of medicine at Brown University, says the evidence that olive oil is good for your heart has never been more clear. "Olive oil is a very healthy food, I consider it more medicine than food," she says.

She points to a big study published earlier this year in the New England Journal of Medicine where researchers in Spain had men and women in their fifties, sixties and seventies who were at risk of heart disease follow one of three diets.

Some ate a low-fat diet, another group ate a Mediterranean diet with nuts. And a third group ate a Mediterranean diet that included almost four tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil per day.

Don't hold back on the olive oil, a Spanish study concludes.

Surprise: Some of the best-tasting extra-virgin olive oils are now being produced domestically. Think Texas, California, Florida.

"So, they could compare the three diets: Was it nuts, was it olive or was the low fat diet beneficial," says Flynn.

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