

Olive leaf extract



New research is confirming the benefits of olive leaf extract, already one of my favorite supplements. I initially developed a potent version of this supplement for my patients with a view to its infection-fighting capabilities. A major pharmaceutical firm had done research in the '60s on oleuropein, a key ingredient in olives, on the way to tweaking this natural molecule into a patentable antibiotic. But researchers abandoned their quest after it proved impossible to improve on Mother Nature.

I have used olive leaf for acne, candida, cystitis, common respiratory infections and sinusitis with good results. Lately, I've become convinced of an even broader application of olive leaf to cardiovascular prevention.



It's long been established that the Mediterranean diet, rich in unrefined olive oil, confers major cardiovascular benefits. While it's been thought that the monounsaturated fats in olive oil were responsible, new research suggests that it's not just the oil itself, but what's IN the oil that protects the circulatory system.

Good quality, extra-virgin olive oil has a fruity aroma and a greenish tint, the signature for its rich content of beneficial polyphenols such as oleuropein and hydroxytyrosol.

In a new study from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, 46 middle-aged overweight men were supplemented with olive leaf extract or a placebo for 12 weeks. Compared with placebo-takers, the olive leaf supplemented men showed a 15 percent improvement in insulin sensitivity, a marker of blood sugar stability.

They also demonstrated a 28 percent improvement in their pancreatic responsiveness. The authors conclude: "Supplementation with olive leaf polyphenols for 12 weeks improved insulin sensitivity and pancreatic beta-cell secretory activity in overweight middle-aged men at risk of developing the metabolic syndrome."

Other studies have suggested that olive leaf may reduce vascular inflammation and lower blood pressure, additional factors that promote heart disease and stroke.

So, consider adding olive leaf extract to supplements such as EPA/DHA, magnesium, resveratrol, curcumin, vitamin D, aged garlic extract and EGCG to prevent cardiovascular disease.

To listen to the March 13 podcast about olive leaf, click here

Reference: "Olive (Olea europaea L.) Leaf Polyphenols Improve Insulin Sensitivity in Middle-Aged Overweight Men: A Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Crossover Trial," de Bock M, Derraik JG, et al, PLoS One, 2013; 8(3): e57622.