



OLIVE LEAF EXTRACT

Support your body's natural defenses

Colds, flu, yeast... olive leaf extract may stop these infections in their tracks. These are only the beginning of the benefits of this botanical health restorer. Research shows the olive leaf to be the source of phytochemicals that exert powerful antibacterial, antiviral, antiparasitic, and antifungal properties – a valuable ally in an era of failing antibiotics and supergerms.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF OLIVE LEAF EXTRACT

Ancient Egyptians used it to mummify their pharaohs. Later, it became a popular folk remedy for “fevers”. In the 1800's the British used it to treat tropical diseases, such as malaria, which were so prevalent in the colonies.

In the early part of this century a phenolic compound called “oleuropein” was isolated from olive leaves. Researchers concluded that oleuropein, found throughout the olive tree, made the tree so resistant to disease and insect infestation. Oleuropein is the bitter principle that must be eliminated from olives before they can be cured and made palatable. This compound was found to be a powerful antioxidant, inhibiting free radicals and the oxidation of low density lipoproteins.

In addition to oleuropein, olive leaves contain flavonoids such as rutin flavonol, luteolin-7-glucoside, flavone, and hesperidin flavanone.

AN ALLY AGAINST SUPERBUGS – VIRUSES, BACTERIA, FUNGUS AND YEAST

More research found a substance called elenolic acid to be a potent ingredient in oleuropein. During the 1960's researchers at Upjohn Pharmaceuticals found that elenolic acid stopped every virus it came in contact with. Calcium elenolate, a salt of elenolic acid, was even more powerful, inhibiting bacteria, and parasites too. They avidly began searching for ways to market this olive leaf compound. There was one hitch. Animal studies showed that once calcium elenolate was ingested it attached itself to a protein in blood serum and was rendered useless. Finding no way to fix this problem, the researchers gave up. The benefits of olive leaf extract would have to wait longer. In recent years a proprietary method that overcame the problem of protein binding was developed. Effective olive leaf extracts became available.

COLD, FLU AND SINUS

Olive leaf extract may prove to be a useful remedy for the common cold, even nasty flu's and other respiratory infections.

James Privitera, MD, the holistic physician with the most experience using olive leaf extract suggests that the extract works against viruses in a number of ways:

- it interferes with the production of certain amino acids necessary for the replication of certain viruses
- it inactivates viruses by “preventing virus shedding, budding, or assembly at the cell membrane” (Walker)
- the extract directly penetrates infected host cells preventing them from replicating
- it inhibits retrovirus production of reverse transcriptase and protease, enzymes that help viruses, such as HIV, to damage healthy cells
- the extract may enhance the immune response by stimulating phagocytosis – the process where immune system cells engulf and destroy microorganisms

Dr. Bernard Friedlander, a chiropractor who incorporates nutritional healing into his practice, comments on his experience with olive leaf extract, “The compound has been useful in my hands for eliminating the symptoms of all types of infections, including fungal, bacterial, viral, and parasitic... skin eruptions, psoriasis, and more. In my chiropractic practice, I've grown to depend on it, especially for health problems arising from viral attack – even for the common cold.” (Walker)

The chiropractor in Toronto commented on his own experience, “I had chronic sinusitis myself – suffered with it for over ten years. Olive leaf extract definitely knocked it out of me within three-and-a half weeks... I don't have any more postnasal drip or chronic cough. In all those years of trying every kind of remedy – including homeopathics – nothing else worked like this product extracted from olives.” (Walker)

CARDIOVASCULAR SUPPORT

The Mediterranean diet is well-known to protect against coronary heart disease (CHD). Researchers at the University of Milan studied oleuropein, and found that it inhibits low density lipoprotein oxidation *in vitro*. Oxidation of low density lipoprotein contributes to plaque formation.

“Oleuropein... effectively inhibited CuSO₄-induced (copper sulphate) LDL oxidation, as assessed by various parameters. We demonstrate in this investigation that polyphenolic components of the Mediterranean diet interfere with biochemical events that are implicated in atherogenetic disease, thus proposing a new link between the Mediterranean diet and prevention of CHD.” (Visioli, *et al.*)

LOWERS BLOOD PRESSURE

In 1962, Italian researchers discovered that oleuropein lowered blood pressure in animals, while others found that it increased blood flow in coronary arteries and relieved arrhythmia. Researchers verified olive leaf extract's blood pressure lowering effect in more animal studies. “The decoction caused relaxation of isolated rat aorta preparations... We also showed that oleuropeoside is a component responsible for vasodilator activity but, from the results it seems likely that at least one other principle is to be found in the olive leaf which is either a vasodilator itself or else potentiates the relaxant effect of oleuropeoside.” (Zarzuolo, *et al.*)

EFFECTS ON BLOOD SUGAR

Animal studies show that olive leaf extract exerts hypoglycemic activity. “Maximum hypoglycemic activity was obtained from samples collected in the winter months, especially in February. One of the compounds responsible for this activity was oleuropeoside... This compound also demonstrated antidiabetic activity in animals with alloxan-induced diabetes.” (Gonzalez)

Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that olive leaf extract lowers blood sugar levels in humans as well. However, we caution that persons with diabetes not self-medicate but use olive leaf extract under the care of a health care practitioner.

INCREASED ENERGY

A welcome benefit reported by all practitioners using olive leaf extract is the increased energy felt by their patients, prompting many to take it even after their problem has cleared up.

SAFETY AND DOSAGE

Olive leaf extract is available in 500 milligram capsules. Suggested dosage is one capsule 1 to 4 times a day, preferably between meals. After the problem has cleared, many prefer to take a maintenance dose of one to two capsules per day.

Olive leaf extract has a long history of safety. Safety studies in laboratory animals confirm that. In humans, doses many times higher than recommended have not produced adverse effects.

Other than triggering symptoms of detoxification or the “die-off” effect in some people, olive leaf extract has no side-effects. Persons experiencing this effect may prefer to support the detoxification process by taking probiotics and vitamin C.

Of course, anyone with serious disorders or chronic illness should use olive leaf extract under the supervision of a qualified health care practitioner.

This ancient botanical may help us fight the flu and other infections and it holds much promise as a broad-based health restorer.

KEY REFERENCES

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