

Are You Eating Rancid Oils?

Rancid oils are a major source of destructive free radicals in our diet. Exposure to air, heat, and light cause oils to oxidize, become rancid, and form free radicals.

Saturated fats are chemically very stable, being completely saturated with all the hydrogen atoms they can hold, and therefore have a high degree of resistance to oxidation. Monounsaturated fats, since they have two less hydrogen atoms than saturated fats, are somewhat more vulnerable to oxidation. Polyunsaturated oils, which are missing several hydrogen atoms, are very unstable and highly reactive to oxidation. Oxidation of oils causes rancidity and the formation of destructive molecular entities known as free radicals. Free radicals are bad because they attack our cells, causing damage and promote premature aging.

Polyunsaturated oils are so unstable that even at room temperature and in subdued light, oxidation occurs inside the bottle. All polyunsaturated vegetable oils sold at grocery stores have become rancid (oxidized) to some degree before you even bring them home. Because the oils have been highly refined and deodorized you can't smell or taste anything, but the free radicals are there, waiting to attack your body.



If you store the oil in the cupboard at room temperature, the oxidation process continues. When you open the bottle and expose the oil to oxygen in the air, oxidation is accelerated. If you leave it out on the counter where it is exposed to light, oxidation progresses even faster. To make matters worse, if you use the oil in cooking, you greatly accelerate the rate of oxidation and free radical formation. For this reason, you should never use polyunsaturated oils in cooking. Most people do this all the time. They buy a bottle of soybean oil and keep it in the cupboard for months and use it along with margarine for all their cooking. It's no wonder why cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and other diseases associated with free radicals are becoming more and more prevalent nowadays. One of the best ways to prevent these diseases is to not use polyunsaturated oils. If you have any polyunsaturated vegetable oils (corn oil, soybean oil, safflower oil, etc.) in your home right now, you would be smart to throw them out. Don't even consider using them; get rid of them now. Throw away salad dressings made with these oils as well.

Olive oil is all right to use because it is primarily a monounsaturated fat and, therefore, much more stable than polyunsaturated oils. Use it mostly for salads. You may also use it in low temperature, short duration cooking.

The only fats you should use for moderate to high temperature cooking are saturated fats like lard, coconut oil, and palm oil. Lard and palm oil have high smoking points (400+ degrees F) so they make good high temperature cooking oils. Coconut oil is highest in saturated fat so it makes an excellent all-purpose cooking oil. It is very stable under heat, but has a lower smoking point, so keep frying temperatures below 360 degrees F.