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Consuming Canola Oil Can Improve Health and Reduce Chronic Disease Risk New Scientific Literature Review Documents Canola Oil's Health Benefits

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA – A comprehensive review of scientific evidence shows that consuming canola oil instead of other fat sources enhances health and can help consumers comply with expert dietary fat recommendations. Studies conducted over the past 25 years about the health effects of canola oil, analyzed in the June 2013 peer-reviewed journal *Nutrition Reviews*, confirm canola oil reduces the risk of heart disease* and suggest that it may also protect against other chronic diseases.

“The objective of this review was to examine the health benefits of canola oil as a dietary component itself, rather than focus on the effects of individual types of fat in the oil,” says Peter Jones, Ph.D., lead researcher and director of the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals at the University of Manitoba. “This approach results in practical advice to consumers about including canola oil in the diet.”

The review, entitled “Evidence of Health Benefits of Canola Oil,” looked at the effects of canola oil consumption on cholesterol, heart disease, inflammation, insulin sensitivity, oxidation of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, energy metabolism and cancer. A total of 270 studies were evaluated of which 40 were considered directly relevant to the review. All 40 papers described human studies with the exception of those related to cancer conditions where only cell culture and animal studies exist to date.

Data revealed that canola oil consumption substantially reduces total and LDL cholesterol levels and improves insulin sensitivity when used in place of saturated fat as well as increases levels of tocopherol (vitamin E) compared with other dietary fat sources. Moreover, studies show that:

- Canola oil can help consumers meet dietary fat recommendations (less than 10 percent saturated fat from total daily calories, minimal *trans* fat and no more than 300 mg of cholesterol per day) and can be included in a diet designed to reduce cholesterol.
- Compared with high-saturated fat or typical Western diets, canola oil-based diets can reduce total and LDL cholesterol in healthy people and those with high cholesterol, reducing the risk of heart disease.
- With 61 percent monounsaturated fat, canola oil may prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol. Oxidized LDL may contribute to inflammation in the arteries and heart disease risk.
- Canola oil may promote immune and cardiovascular health through its anti-blood clotting and antioxidative effects.
- Early research indicates the potential for canola oil to protect against breast and colon cancers.

“Canola oil can now be regarded as one of the healthiest edible vegetable oils in terms of its biological functions and its ability to improve health and aid in reducing disease-related risk factors,” says Jones. “Current research is expected to provide more complete evidence to support the health-promoting effects of canola oil when consumed at levels consistent with dietary guidelines.”

The scientific literature review was conducted by the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals at the University of Manitoba. It was equally funded by the Canola Council of Canada and U.S. Canola Association. The complete review is available in the June *Nutrition Reviews* at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nure.12033/full>.

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* In October 2006, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized a qualified health claim for canola oil on its ability to reduce the risk of heart disease when used in place of saturated fat. For the complete claim, go to www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm073992.htm#canola.