

Olive oil anointed as bowel cancer defence

OLIVE oil could safeguard against one of the most deadly forms of cancer, researchers claim.

They have found a mixture of compounds, called phenols, extracted from virgin olive oil may help ward off colon cancer.

Their findings support the long-held belief in the health benefits of a Mediterranean diet, which is rich in olive oil.

As well as an inappropriate diet, the risk of bowel cancer is believed to be increased by smoking, a lack of exercise and obesity. Colon cancer is the third most common cancer in men and the second in women.

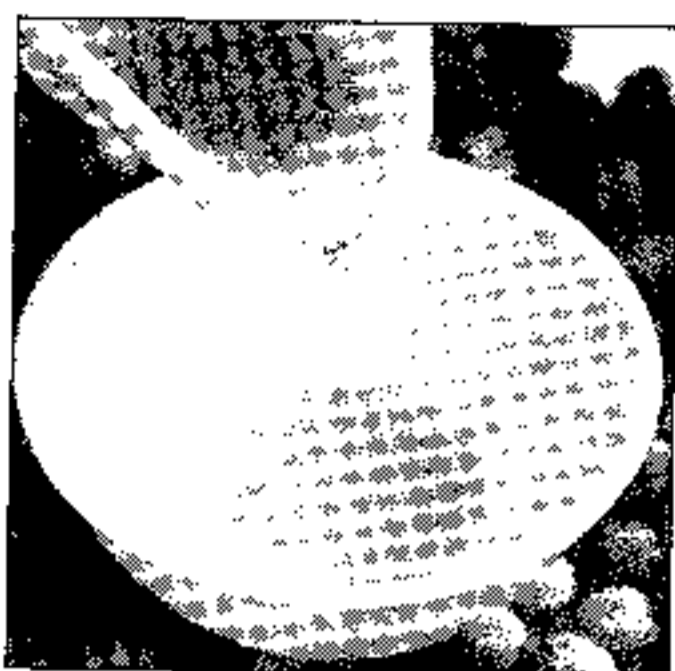
Scientists at the University of Ulster experimented by putting cancer cells in concentrations of phenols. This appeared to inhibit the formation of tumours.

Olive oil is high in mono-unsaturated fat and a good source of antioxidants, both of which are said to combat the development of cancer.

Chris Gill, one of the researchers, said: "While the findings are purely of an experimental nature, they identify mechanisms that support the scientific and medical evidence suggesting an association between olive oil consumption and decreased risk of cancer."

Dr Gill said the next stage would be to test the theory on an animal.

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HEALTHY . . . olive oil is high in mono-unsaturated fat.

The team, led by Professor Ian Rowland, will publish its findings in the *International Journal of Cancer*.

Last month, a study suggested that olive oil can prevent inflammation in the same way as headache pills.

Researchers found the main compound in the oil, oleocanthal, contained the same properties as the painkiller ibuprofen.

Ibuprofen has been linked to a lower risk of cancer and heart problems, as has aspirin, which belongs to the same class of anti-inflammatory drugs.

The study found that extra virgin olive oil, made from the first pressing of olives, may offer similar long-term advantages.

Olive oil sales have been outselling other cooking oils.
— Daily Mail

Olive oil shown to help ward off breast cancer

OLIVE oil can help fight breast cancer, researchers have found.

They say the discovery could guide the development of related treatment.

"Our findings underpin epidemiological studies that show that the Mediterranean diet has significant protective effects against cancer, heart disease and ageing," said the study's lead author, Javier Menendez, of Northwestern University's Feinberg medical school in Chicago.

Mr Menendez said that, in a series of laboratory

experiments on breast cancer cells, researchers showed that oleic acid, found in olive oil, dramatically cut the levels of a cancer-promoting gene called Her-2/neu (also known as erb B-2).

High levels of the gene occur in more than a fifth of breast cancer patients.

They are also associated with highly aggressive tumours that have a poor prognosis, according to findings reported in the January 10 edition of *Annals of Oncology*.