



## **FDA allows qualified heart health claim for olive oil**

**The US Food and Drug Administration has authorized a new qualified health claim for oils with high acid levels to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease**

As many grandmothers in the Mediterranean know, olive oil has all kinds of invaluable health benefits. Finally, the American Food and Drug Administration has now also recognized it as having medicinal properties based on various scientific research carried out by numerous universities and research institutes.

Recognizing the importance of science-based food decisions, there are two kinds of health claims on food product packages – authorized health claims and qualified health claims.

An authorized health claim meets the more rigorous standard of “significant scientific agreement,” meaning that the claim is supported by the totality of publicly available scientific evidence for a substance/disease relationship. A qualified health claim means it is supported by more limited scientific evidence that doesn’t meet the rigorous standard.

The FDA responded to a petition for a new qualified health claim for edible oils containing high levels of oleic acid, a monounsaturated fat that has been shown to have cardiovascular benefits when it replaces heart-damaging saturated fat.

Manufacturers of these oils can choose to include a qualified health claim on their label stating that “supportive but not conclusive scientific evidence suggests that daily consumption of about 1½ tablespoons (20 grams) of oils containing high levels of oleic acid, may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease”. The claim will also need to make it clear that to achieve this benefit these oils “should replace fats and oils higher in saturated fat and not increase the total number of calories you eat in a day.”

The decision to authorize a qualified health claim on their label should encourage people to eat more nutritious and healthy foods in order to reduce the rates of chronic diseases associated with poor diets, including type 2 diabetes, obesity and even cancer.

In short, consumers having access to clear and transparent food labels are now empowered to make food choices smarter for their health.

With the TAICHI project, co-funded by the EU and promoted by the two main consortia of Italian olive growers, Italia Olivicola and UNAPOL, you can better understand the world of olive oil and deepen the health benefits associated with using extra virgin olive oil.

To find out more about the TAICHI project, visit [OurOliveOil.com](http://OurOliveOil.com)

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