



## Health benefits of Canola oil

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Canola oil is edible cooking oil which commonly comes from varieties of the rape plant. It also comes from certain varieties of mustard seed. It is a Canadian crop but United States also become a huge producer and consumer of the crop. The annual production of rapeseed oil/canola oil from around the world is approximately 58 million tons. India is the third largest rapeseed-mustard producer in the world after China and Canada with 12 per cent of world's total production. India holds a premier position in rapeseed-mustard economy of the world with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> rank in area and production respectively. This crop accounts for nearly one-third of the oil produced in India, making it the country's key edible oilseed crop. Canola types are gaining wide acceptance among the farmers in Punjab, due to more returns, white rust and frost tolerance and higher oil content with better oil quality. The area under cultivation increased from 9798 acres in 2002-03 to 55500 acres in 2006-07. The venture conclusively proved the existence of niche market for canola quality oil and viability of bringing more area under canola cultivation. Though the nutritional advantages of rapeseed-mustard oil available in India outdo many other edible oils (lowest amount of harmful saturated fatty acids and contains two essential fatty acids – linoleic and linolenic), the presence of erucic acid and glucosinolates are considered to be undesirable. Erucic acid is feared to cause health problems and high glucosinolates in the oil cake are not desired for animal feed. Hence, efforts to develop canola quality and also low erucic acid containing mustard varieties acquire importance in the crop improvement programme of Rapeseed- Mustard in India. With the exception of sunflower and safflower oil, canola oil has the highest content of monounsaturated fats among vegetable oils. It is a functional fuel that is a good replacement for non-renewable resources, such as the petroleum oils used in lipsticks, candles, bio-fuels, lubricants and inks. However,



as a vegetable oil for cooking, canola oil can provide users with many health benefits that other oils simply cannot provide.

**Canola and its processing:** Canola oil is retrieved from the crushed seeds of the Canola plant, which is a part of the Brassica family. Vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli are also part of the same family of plants. Canola plants grow between three to six feet, producing fragrant, pretty, bright yellow flowers. Seeds from mature Canola plants are crushed to extract the oil which is then refined, bottled and sold as oil for external use as well as consumption. Canola oil contains omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids, making it the healthiest cooking oil. It is also low in saturated fats, just like the olive oil.

### Health benefits:

#### *Cardio-vascular diseases:*

The oil from the Canola plant is extremely beneficial for health as it contains the least amount of saturated fat and no trans-fat or cholesterol, making it the healthiest cooking oil among its peers. The study was conducted by Diabetes Foundation of India (DFI) and National Diabetes, Obesity and Cholesterol Foundation (N-DOC) along with Fortis C-DOC Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases and Endocrinology. Around 90 people with fatty liver were enrolled into the study. The results of the trial, conducted over six months, demonstrated multiple health benefits, along with the possibility of averting several chronic and often lethal diseases, just by replacing commonly used refined oils with canola or olive pomace oils. Canola oil is rich in monounsaturated fat, reducing the risk of coronary disease and a rich source of omega-6 fatty acid, essential for growth and development of the brain in individuals. Canola oil contains no cholesterol, which is a major benefit. Cholesterol can clog human arteries and put excessive strain on cardiovascular system. Cholesterol has been shown to be a major contributor to atherosclerosis, which can result in heart attacks and

strokes. Omega-3 fatty acids and omega-6 fatty acids are present in canola oil, and while those are often considered “good” and “bad” cholesterol, respectively. The body needs both even though one is considered “unhealthy”. The ratio is 2:1, which is one of the healthiest ratios of any vegetable oil, even healthier than olive oil. Sterols are also found in rich supply in canola oil. The phytosterols that are found in canola oil can actually reduce the creation and absorption of cholesterol that you may get from other foods. Therefore, not only does canola oil contain no cholesterol, it can actually reduce cholesterol levels by 10-15 per cent.

**Joint tenderness:** Joint tenderness and stiffness can be reduced by canola oil. It is also helpful for people suffering from inflammation due to chronic arthritis. Canola oil also reduces the inflammation due to asthma and bowel disorders.

**Skin benefits:** Canola oil is rich in vitamin E and K, which helps to eradicate skin problems like wrinkles, fine lines, acne, blemishes etc. Rich in Vitamins E and K, the oil reduces skin afflictions and ageing signs like acne, fine lines, wrinkles, blemishes and spots. Canola oil contains a good amount of anti-oxidant vitamin E, which is a powerful lipid soluble anti oxidant. It protects the skin from oxygen free radicals, thus making it soft and nourished, giving a youthful appearance. One teaspoon of canola oil contains about 15 per cent of the daily recommended value of vitamin E. The oil extracted from the Canola seed is enormously beneficial to the hair. Hot oil hair treatments are an excellent remedy for dryness, breakage, frizzy hair

and split ends.

**Hair problems:** Canola oil is an inexpensive and tremendously effective remedy for limp and damaged hair. The oil serves as a base for natural home remedies for lack lustre hair as it coats one’s tresses against dirt, pollution and damage from the sun as well as penetrates the hair shaft to moisturize and repair damaged locks.

**Conclusion:** At present the cultivation of canola crop

accounts for less than 1 per cent of the total area under rapeseed-mustard in India. Raising the share of canola crops in total rapeseed mustard cultivation is important for increasing the quality of edible oil available to the consumers in the country. The strategies to be adopted to benefit canola cultivation in India can be broadly classified into production strategies, dealing

with the technical and agro ecological aspects of canola cultivation, marketing strategies aimed at getting better market share for the canola oil and policy support strategies for creating conducive environment for proper implementation of production and marketing strategies.

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