

## *Ghee is Better than Butter!*

Our bodies need energy to run. We get energy from our diet if we are ingesting: a) fat, b) protein and c) carbohydrates. Fat is essential for our health because it supports a number of our body's functions. In addition, some vitamins, for instance, must have fat to dissolve and nourish our body. But what type of fat should be we using? Research says there are two categories: healthy and unhealthy fats. In the unhealthy category we find fats that are further categorized as saturated and trans fat.



- **Saturated fat.** Found mainly from food from animal sources, it has been shown to raise total blood cholesterol levels and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels, which can increase your risk of cardiovascular disease. Saturated fat may also increase your risk of type 2 diabetes.
- **Trans fat.** Can occur naturally in some foods, especially foods from animals. Most trans fats are made during food processing through partial hydrogenation of unsaturated fats. This process creates fats that are easier to cook with and less likely to spoil than are naturally occurring oils. These trans fats are called industrial or synthetic trans fats. Research studies show that synthetic trans fat can increase unhealthy LDL cholesterol and lower healthy high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. This can increase your risk of cardiovascular disease.

Then there is the category of healthy fats:

- **Monounsaturated fat.** This is found in a variety of foods and oils. Studies show that eating foods rich in monounsaturated fats (MUFAs) improves blood cholesterol levels, which can decrease your risk of heart disease. Research also shows that MUFAs may benefit insulin levels and blood sugar control, which can be especially helpful if you have type 2 diabetes.

- **Polyunsaturated fat.** This is a type of fat found mostly in plant-based foods and oils. Evidence shows that eating foods rich in polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs) improves blood cholesterol levels, which can decrease your risk of heart disease. PUFAs may also help decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes.

These categories supply us with one way of helping us find a good fat to add to our diet. But millennia before we started to think in terms of the chemical make-up of our dietary fat, the ancient seers of India confirmed that the best dietary fat for daily human consumption was ghee, or clarified butter.

Ironically, India, the cradle of Ayurveda, or the most comprehensive dietary and lifestyle guidelines for total health, is also the place that has been maligning ghee for decades. But, new research seems to be turning the tides! An article that appeared in the *Mail Online India* this past Wednesday October 10, 2012, cites research that confirms the health benefits of ghee.

The article entitled: “A spoon of ghee full of health ‘poses no danger to cardiac health’ and could protect us from cancer” starts off by reversing the misguided beliefs about ghee: “Desi Ghee or clarified butter oil - often blamed for obesity and heart diseases - is not that bad after all. Indian scientists have just discovered that cow ghee could protect us from cancer.”<sup>1</sup>

According to the article, the findings now confirm that ghee is good for you for the following reasons (these findings were done using cow milk derived ghee and do not necessarily apply to buffalo milk derived ghee):



- Cow ghee enhances the availability of enzymes responsible for detoxification of cancer-causing substances and decreases the availability of those responsible for activation of carcinogens
- Cow ghee improves blood HDL level, which is good for heart

- [it] decrease[s] the expression of genes responsible for [cancerous] cell proliferation and raise[s] regulated genes responsible for cell apoptosis
- Cow ghee contains conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which is known to possess beneficial health properties - vegetable oils lack this particular fatty acid.
- Most vegetable oils contain high amount of unsaturated fatty acid as well as linoleic acid - which is considered pro-carcinogenic as it forms free radicals known to damage DNA.

These conclusions echo similar findings here in the West. The choicest fat, butter, got a bad rap a few decades ago and was replaced by the miraculous margarine in the early 1920s<sup>2</sup>. Past few decades, however, have uncovered the lethal trans fats contained in margarine and have banned it as an option. Since then, we have been in search of the ideal cooking fat. This has led only to the proliferation of a confusing variety of options: tens of bottles daunting the special health benefits of different types of vegetable oils pushed to the forefront by aggressive marketing campaigns and political lobbying.

## *Are Vegetable Oils an Option?*



Vegetable oils have been daunted as the ideal replacement for fat derived from animal source, citing their high content of poly-unsaturated fatty acids (PUFA), the idea being that PUFAs in vegetable seed oils were supposed to balance hormones, strengthen the immune system, and prevent cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, and all types of inflammation, right? Wrong! say the latest scientific findings. Ray Peat, Ph.D., a physiologist who has been studying hormones and dietary fats since 1968 says “PUFAs in vegetable seeds oils are the bane of human health – they actually cause cancer, diabetes, obesity, aging, thrombosis, arthritis, and immunodeficiencies. Their only use [...] is as ingredients in paints and varnishes.”<sup>3</sup> But what is the problem with eating PUFA-s?

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Poly-unsaturated oils contain long chain fatty acids which are sensitive to heat and unstable. Meaning: when you expose them to heat for cooking, they damage mitochondria<sup>4</sup> through oxidization and enzyme suppression. Oxidization is the breeding ground for free radicals, or the formation of toxic build-up in the body that is the number one cause for chronic immune diseases. Even if you consume these oils on salads without heating them, the heat in the physiology is enough to oxidize them and cause their toxic decomposition. The worst thing is these fatty acids remain in your body for a long time after you have consumed them, damaging tissue and cell functioning but particularly the thyroid system. Studies show that slow metabolism, low energy, a sluggish thyroid accompany the consumption of vegetable oils.<sup>5</sup>

Amongst the highly popular and highly toxic vegetable oils on the market today are Soy Bean oil and Canola Oil. We know, according to SVA precepts, that the soy bean is not a desirable food item. It is a large bean and has therefore a “guru prabhava” – that is: it requires very high agni to be digested, and even then, it has a clogging side-effect in the physiology and interferes with the proper distribution of nutrients, energy, and the flow of prana, causing many chronic problem after long term usage. This is not to mention the negative side-effects that science confirms it has nowadays – it mimics estrogen molecules and imbalances the hormonal system, specially for women.



## ***What you do not know about Canola Oil***

But Canola oil’s name and fame reach far and wide despite research proving its negative impact on health. All kinds of food items proudly proclaim being made with Canola oil: from cookies to salad dressings, frozen dinners, breads and other quick so called- healthy nut and fruit snacks. Canola oil is a mono-unsaturated fat, like Olive oil, and is hence considered a “good” fat. It is even considered to be better than olive oil because it is high in Omega-3 fats that are believed to help prevent heart disease (Olive oil does not contain significant amounts of Omega-3 fats).

So what's the problem with Canola oil?

For starters, it is not a natural oil. It is made in a lab, the result of chemical and biological manipulation. Did you know that a Canola plant or seed does not exist! Canola oil is industrially derived from genetically modified rapeseed plants. Even if the rapeseed plant was grown organically, yielding organic Canola Oil, you should still not consume any of it. Why? Because the rapeseed plant contains toxic substances



known as glucosinolates and a very toxic fatty acid called erucic acid. These two ingredients even deter insects from eating the plant. They are not even fit for animals to consume as they are known to cause metabolic disorders. But why was rapeseed of interest at all?

Rapeseed grows very easily in cool climates (Northern

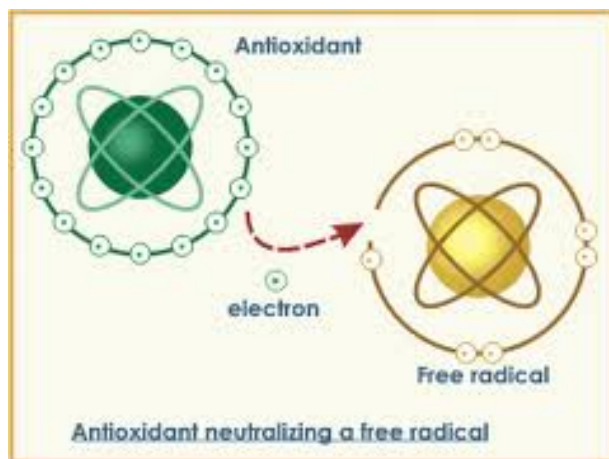
Europe and Canada) and it is thus easier and cheaper to harvest as a commercial crop. It was originally manipulated to reduce its extremely bitter taste and high content of toxic erucic acid in order to serve as cheap and available animal feed. Studies have shown that erucic acid is a mono-unsaturated fat that causes fatty deposits on the heart and cardiac fibrosis (an abnormal thickening of the heart valve and loss of flexibility which can result in heart failure).<sup>6</sup>

Natural rapeseed oil contains as much as 50% erucic acid. In the USA, it is illegal to sell rapeseed oil for human consumption if it contains more than 2% erucic acid by weight, and more than 5% in Europe. Therefore plant breeders set out to develop a rapeseed plant that was safer. The genetically modified rapeseed plant contains no more than 5% erucic acid. This new breed was called LEAR oil for “low erucic acid rapeseed” but, for marketing purposes, it was given a new more palatable name and acronym: “Canadian oil low-acid” or Canola oil

To summarize: according to scientific findings, why should you avoid Canola oil in your diet?

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- While it may help reduce total cholesterol and LDL (“bad cholesterol”), it also decreases HDL (“good cholesterol”) – HDL has been shown to protect against heart disease occurrences.
- In lab tests conducted on animals: Canola oil increased blood pressure, promoted insulin resistance, caused kidney lesions, shortened life-span.<sup>7</sup>
- Canola oil causes blood cells to lose their flexibility, hindering circulation and increasing blood pressure. This is caused by phytosterols found in the oil. This hardening of the blood cells also affects their ability to absorb nutrients and expel waste (red blood cells carry oxygen and remove carbon dioxide waste as part of their primary function).<sup>8</sup>
- Canola oil is supposed to have higher heat resistance since it is composed mostly of polyunsaturated fatty acids, but studies show that it produces free mutagenic byproducts just as readily as other oils, when used in cooking. The free radicals produced from this



wreak havoc on the body, and the body has to use up its antioxidants to balance itself. Studies find that the use of Canola oil depletes the body’s natural antioxidant reserves, such as Vit E. A deficiency can lead to anemia,

muscle degeneration, weakness, increasing the risk of cancer and heart disease.<sup>9</sup>

- Canola oil is not fit to be consumed either cooked or unheated: it is processed under high temperatures, and during this process all the ALA (Alpha linolenic Acid) or Omega-3 fatty acids it contains are destroyed, yielding only trans fatty acids – the worse fats you can have in your diet. Trans fats have been shown to increase the risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and autoimmune diseases. No amount of trans fat is safe to consume.

So what are our options?

## ***Butter is Better!***

Butter's health benefits are confirmed:

- Butter does not raise blood lipid levels because it was shown that 20% of the fat in butter consists of short- and medium-chain fatty acids that are directly converted into energy rather than staying around long enough to affect blood fat levels.
- Butter is our best source of Vit A and E, which supports the thyroid and adrenal glands, as well as the cardiovascular system. These are also antioxidants which protect against heart disease and cancer.
- Butter is a good source of dietary cholesterol, an essential nutrient for the brain and nervous system, specially in children.
- Butter contains conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) that protects against cancer.
- Butter is a good source of iodine necessary for proper thyroid unction
- It promotes gastrointestinal health
- It is a good source of K2 which helps prevent tooth decay and build strong teethc and bones. <sup>10</sup>



## ***Even Better than Butter is Ghee!***

Also known as butter oil or drawn butter is by far the best oil you could consume on a regular daily basis. Why? For one, many people who experience adverse reactions to dairy products are also unable to consume butter. Butter oil or ghee is butter that has been slow cooked and whose casein and lactose have been removed, making it lighter and safe for lactose intolerant people to consume.

Ghee also has an ideal make-up: it contains 8gm of saturated fatty acid (SFA), 3.7gm of monounsaturated fatty acid (MFA) and 0.5 g

polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA). Plus it has the following benefits:

- It is rich in fat soluble vitamins: A, D, K2 as well as CLA (conjugated linoleic acid – we know by know that CLA found primarily in animal grass-fed animals may protect against cancer, heart disease, and type II diabetes)



We are just barely beginning to understand the health benefits of ghee; however, we should be also cautious. Ghee, even though an oil, may still cause health problems if consumed in high quantities, specially when it is not prepared in the optimal way. Vaidya Mishra's SVA lineage, or Shaka Vansiya Ayurveda, particularly highlights the benefits of consuming ghee made from yogurt not just directly butter. This method ensures that the final product is lighter and easier on the metabolic system, thus more readily available for the physiology, due to the presence of probiotics.

SVA discusses the benefits of ghee made from yogurt, in the words of the ayurvedic seer, Bhava Mishra (also known as Bhavaprakash). He says that ghee is:

- a great rasayana (rejuvenator) for the eyes
- enhances the digestive fire while cooling and alkalizing
- binds toxins and pacifies pitta and vata
- with proper combining and processing, it is not clogging or kapha aggravating
- enhances complexion and glow of the face and body
- increases physical and mental stamina
- supports learning, retention, and recall
- increases longevity
- cools and lubricates the stomach wall
- nurtures and cleanses blood tissue



Modern research confirms that ghee:

1. Supports the eyes.
2. Gives satiation.
3. Supports healthy hormone production.
4. Supports mineral absorption.
5. Provides sustaining energy.
6. Promotes healthy bile by supporting the liver.
7. Supports the health of cell-membranes.
8. Maintains anti-inflammatory process and supports the healing power of the body.
9. Helps delivery and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K.

So ghee is the best fat you can add to your diet. You can make your own or buy some from [www.chandika.com](http://www.chandika.com) where we sell the best probiotic ghee, Mum's Ghee, made according to the ancient methods. If you choose to make your own, here are some traditional ghee making secrets that can help you along the way.

We know from Ayurveda that in addition to nutritional facts, The vibrational intelligence in the food is paramount. This applies to all foods, but it is especially important in the process of making and using ghee. You can find general instructions for making ghee on [www.chandika.com](http://www.chandika.com) but here are a few more pointers you can follow:

- 1) Use "grass-fed" organic heavy cream to make yoghurt. Churn yoghurt into butter.
- 2) To avoid burning the fat molecules, heat butter on low-temperature in a special stainless steel pot that heats evenly from all sides. This process slowly evaporates the water content of the butter, separates milk protein molecules like casein, and removes unwanted molecules.
- 3) Ghee must be filtered in a way that removes all micro-molecules of milk solids.
- 4) Pour into glass jar and let all the steam evaporate before sealing.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Mail online India Wednesday oct 10, 2012

Wednesday, Oct 10 2012

**A spoon of ghee full of health: 'Poses no danger to cardiac health' and could protect us from cancer**

By [DINESH C SHARMA](#)

Desi Ghee or clarified butter oil - often blamed for obesity and heart diseases - is not that bad after all.

Indian scientists have just discovered that cow ghee could protect us from cancer.

Cow ghee enhances the availability of enzymes responsible for detoxification of cancer-causing substances and decreases the availability of those responsible for activation of carcinogens, scientists from the National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) have reported in the latest issue of the Indian Journal of Medical Research.

The new finding, however, does not mean you can go ahead with liberal amount of ghee in your food.

**Ghee poses no danger to cardiac health if the total fat intake is restricted to the prescribed limit, researchers said**

One must ensure that the intake of total fat (including ghee) should not exceed the prescribed limit of fat consumption. In the experiments done in lab, scientists studied the effects of cow ghee compared to soybean oil on female rats which were artificially given breast cancer-causing chemicals.

They observed that the initiation and progress of mammary cancer decreased in rats which were fed on cow ghee. However, there was a greater proportion of tumours in animals fed on soybean oil.

Researchers have deciphered the mechanism of ghee's protective properties.

'Feeding cow ghee decreased the expression of genes responsible for cell proliferation and raised regulated genes responsible for cell apoptosis', explained Dr Vinod Kansal, who led the research team.

One probable factor in cow ghee is the presence of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which is known to possess beneficial properties.

Cow ghee is a rich natural source of CLA, whereas, vegetable oils lack this particular fatty acid.

Most vegetable oils contain high amount of unsaturated fatty acid as well as linoleic acid - which is considered pro-carcinogenic as it forms free radicals known to damage DNA.

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The ghee available in India is mostly made from buffalo milk.

And though the study was done on cow ghee, scientists said buffalo ghee is also expected to be similarly effective because both contain CLA.

Dr Kansal said 'Ghee poses no danger to cardiac health as long as the total fat intake remains restricted to the prescribed limit.'

Moreover, ghee improves blood HDL level, which is good for heart, he added. 'I have serious reservation about doctors prescribing vegetable oil brands with highly unsaturated fat which is pro-carcinogenic,' the researcher said.

<sup>2</sup> King, Margie. "Butter: It's Good For You." *Journal of Well Being*. November/December, 2012. "Between 1920 and 1960, American's use of butter declined from 18 pounds per person per year to 4 pounds, yet heart disease went from a relatively unknown condition to the number one killer." Page 24.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in the "Are Polyunsaturated Oils Really Healthy?" in *The Well Being Journal*, November/December 2012, page 16.

<sup>4</sup> In Microbiology, the main function of the mitochondrion is the production of energy, in the form of adenosine triphosphate (ATP). The cell uses this energy to perform the specific work necessary for cell survival and function. The raw materials used to generate ATP are the foods that we eat, or tissues within the body that are broken down in a process called catabolism. The breaking down of food into simpler molecules such as carbohydrates, fats, and protein is called metabolism. These molecules are then transferred into the mitochondria, where further processing occurs. The reactions within the mitochondria produce specific molecules that can have their electrical charges separated within the inner mitochondrial membrane. These charged molecules are processed within the five electron transport chain complexes to finally combine with oxygen to make ATP. The process of the charged substances combining with oxygen is called oxidation, while the chemical reaction making ATP is called phosphorylation. The overall process is called oxidative phosphorylation. The product produced by this process is ATP ([http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why\\_do\\_all\\_eukaryotic\\_cells\\_have\\_mitochondria](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why_do_all_eukaryotic_cells_have_mitochondria))

<sup>5</sup> "Are Polyunsaturated Oils Really Healthy?" in *The Well Being Journal*, November/December 2012, page 117.

<sup>6</sup> Engfeldt, B and Gustafsson, B. Morphological effects of rapeseed oil in rats. III. Studies in germ-free rats. *Acta Med Scand Suppl* 1975; 585:27-40; 41-46.

<sup>8</sup> Naito, Y., et al. Blood coagulation and osmolar tolerance of erythrocytes in stroke prone spontaneously hypertensive rats given rapeseed oil or soybean oil as the only dietary fat. *Toxicol Lett* 2000; 116: 209-215. And Ohara, N., et al. Dietary intake of rapeseed oil as the sole fat nutrient in Wistar rats – lack of increase in plasma lipids and renal lesion. *J Toxicol Sci* 2008; 33:641-645.

<sup>9</sup> Ratnayake, W.M., et al. Vegetable oils high in phytosterols make erythrocytes less deformable and shorten the life span of stroke-prone spontaneously hypertensive rats. *J Nutr* 2000; 130:1166-1178.

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<sup>9</sup> Naito, Y. et al. Thirteen-week dietary intake of rapeseed oil and soybean oil as the only dietary fat in Wistar Kyoto rats – change in blood pressure. *Food Chem Toxicol* 2000; 38:811-816.

<sup>10</sup> King, Margie. “Butter: it’s good for you”. *Journal of Well Being*. November/December, 2012. Pp. 24-25.