



Qualified Health Claim for Canola Oil Q&A

Q: What is the good news about canola oil?

A: Canola oil is now eligible to bear a qualified health claim (QHC) on its ability to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease due to its unsaturated fat content, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Heart disease remains the number one killer of U.S. adults, and high saturated fat intake increases the risk of this disease. Canola oil, which has the lowest saturated fat of all common edible oils, may help reduce the risk of heart disease when used in place of other oils and solid fats without increasing daily calories.

Q: How will the QHC impact public health?

A: Availability of the QHC will promote public health by informing consumers about a simple, affordable and convenient strategy to reduce their risk of heart disease. The claim may also encourage food manufacturers and food service providers to substitute canola oil for other oils with less favorable nutritional profiles.

Q: How does canola oil reduce the risk of heart disease?

A: Unsaturated fat from canola oil lowers total and LDL or “bad” cholesterol when consumed by healthy adults as part of a diet low in saturated fat, according to several research studies. Canola oil is high in healthy unsaturated fat, free of cholesterol and *trans* fat, and naturally low in saturated fat.

Q: Can canola oil help improve peoples’ diets as well?

A: Yes. The type of fat people consume matters as much as the amount of fat. Canola oil can increase Americans’ compliance with dietary recommendations for specific types of fat when substituted for other cooking oils. For example, the American Heart Association recently lowered its guidelines for saturated fat intake from 10% to 7% of daily calories. Using canola oil instead of oils higher in saturated fat makes it easier to meet this recommendation.

Q: How much canola oil will people need to benefit from the QHC?

A: Based on scientific studies evaluated in the petition, 1.5 tablespoons or 19 grams a day is enough to benefit from canola oil in the diet. Drizzle some canola-oil based dressing on a salad or cook with canola oil. Such simple acts may make a significant difference to the heart.

Q: Will consumers understand the QHC?

A: Consumer research conducted prior to petitioning the FDA indicated that the QHC language was believable and easy to understand by consumers.

Q: What makes a product eligible to bear the QHC?

A: A food is eligible to bear the claim if it contains at least 4.75 grams of canola oil per reference amount customarily consumed, no more than one gram of trans fat and low levels of saturated fat and cholesterol. In addition to 100 percent canola oil, products that contain canola oil as a primary ingredient like certain salad dressings and margarines are eligible. However, products containing a small amount of the oil are not.

Q: Where will consumers see the QHC?

A: Consumers can look for the FDA-authorized claim on the labels or any advertising or promotional materials of canola oil products that are eligible to bear the claim. However, the impact of the claim will go well beyond labels. It will greatly enhance public awareness about the benefits of choosing a healthy oil at the table and in the kitchen.

Q: How tough is it to get a QHC?

A: Only a handful of QHCs have been authorized by the FDA since they were allowed for use on food labels. The FDA puts all health claim petitions through rigorous scientific review.

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The U.S. Canola Association (USCA) was established in 1989 to increase U.S. canola production in order to meet the growing public demand for healthy products. Based in Washington, D.C., the USCA promotes and encourages the establishment and maintenance of conditions favorable to the production, marketing, processing and use of domestic canola.

Canola Oil: Good for Every Body!

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