



## OIL ESSENTIALS

No matter which oil you reach for, here are some basic guidelines to remember:

**Cooking:** Not all oils are suitable for cooking. The temperature at which an oil begins to break down is called its smoke point, so you never want to heat an oil past that maximum temperature. If you do overheat an oil and it begins to smoke in the pan, simply empty and wash the pan and start again with a fresh batch at a lower temperature.

**Take a multivitamin with your oils:** Because oils consist of delicate carbon chains, they can go rancid pretty easily; rancid oil contains free radicals, molecules that destroy cells. A good antioxidant will help to stem the progression of free radicals, so remember to take a multivitamin if you are not eating an antioxidant-rich meal with dark greens or colorful fruits and berries.

**Storage:** Oils should be stored away from heat in opaque or dark containers. Keeping them in the fridge is a good option and will guarantee protection against any free radical formation.



## OILS TO AVOID

Vegetable oils, such as corn, safflower, soybean and canola, may sound healthy, but there are good reasons to avoid them.

**Corn oil** is mostly omega-6, and is usually highly refined. (Plus, most corn in the U.S. is genetically modified.)

**Safflower oil** is 78 percent omega-6 and contains nothing particular to recommend it. "I think this oil is quite undesirable because it oxidizes extremely rapidly," says Dr. Pescatore.

**Soybean oil** is almost always refined and is hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated into shortenings, margarines or [usually] salad dressings. Plus, it's genetically modified," says Dr. Pescatore.

Though **canola oil** has been widely advocated as a healthy choice, it is actually an unhealthy oil that has undeservingly reaped the benefits of great marketing. As the esteemed lipid biochemist Dr. Mary Enig, PhD, points out, "Like all modern vegetable oils, canola oil goes through the process of caustic refining, bleaching and degumming." The wonderful omega-3s in canola oil easily become rancid when subjected to the high temperature needed to extract the oil. Therefore, it has to be deodorized, which turns a large number of the omega-3s into trans fats. And canola oil used in foods is even worse, as it hydrogenates easily, making it ideal for shelf life but not for your life, as hydrogenation increases the trans-fat content.<sup>1</sup>

