

Peanut Blog

An ounce of information



'Refined' doesn't mean healthier: GMC Srinagar dispels cooking oil

Srinagar, Jun 15 (KNO): Dispelling a common misconception among consumers, the Department of Community Medicine at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar has said that refined oil should not automatically be considered healthier than other cooking oils, stressing that the overall impact on health depends largely on the type of oil chosen, how it is used, and the quantity consumed.

In a public health awareness campaign, the department said many people associate the term "refined" with purity and superior health benefits. However, experts said that refining is merely an industrial process designed to improve appearance, taste, and shelf life, and does not necessarily make oils better for heart health. The refining process may also reduce naturally occurring antioxidants and beneficial compounds such as Vitamin E and polyphenols.

According to the advisory, accessed by the news agency —Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the label "refined" can often mislead consumers into believing a product is automatically healthy, clarifying that nutritional value depends more on fatty acid composition and cooking usage rather than whether the oil is refined or unrefined. Even healthier oils can become harmful if repeatedly heated, excessively used for deep frying, or reused multiple times, generating harmful oxidation products that may increase cardiovascular disease risk, it said.

"Most adults should limit visible oil consumption to around two to three tablespoons per day, depending on physical activity level," the department said. It explained that invisible fats naturally present in milk, dairy products, eggs, meat, fish, nuts, seeds, cereals, and pulses contribute significantly to total daily fat consumption and should not be overlooked.

The department identified mustard oil as one of the best choices for routine cooking due to its favourable fatty acid profile and presence of omega-3 fatty acids. Rice bran oil was recommended for occasional frying because of its high smoke point and cholesterol-lowering properties. Groundnut oil was listed as a healthy alternative due to its richness in monounsaturated fats, while soybean and sunflower oils were recommended for periodic rotation rather than exclusive use. Olive oil was suggested for salads, dressings, and low-to-medium heat cooking, while ghee was advised only in limited quantities to enhance flavour.

The advisory cautioned against frequent consumption of hydrogenated fats, vanaspati (dalda), repeatedly reheated oils, and processed foods rich in palm oil, which increase bad cholesterol and elevate heart disease risk. The department said there is no single "perfect" cooking oil. Instead, families should focus on using healthy oils in moderation, rotating different oils occasionally, and keeping total visible oil intake within recommended limits. "Healthy oil alone cannot guarantee a healthy heart. The real difference comes from healthy habits, sensible cooking practices, and a balanced lifestyle," the advisory stated —(KNO)

Source: <https://www.kashmirnewsobserver.com/top-stories/-refined-doesn-t-mean-healthier-gmc-srinagar-dispels-cooking-oil-myths-kno-203258>