



EATING 101

RU DINING HEALTHY?

MISLEADING

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM
A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and Department of Nutritional Sciences

Beyond the Buzzwords: The Truth about Seed Oils

Seed oil has become one of the internet's favorite food villains. Once an innocent staple in salad dressings and stir-fries, they have become the focus of heated debates and bold health claims, ranging from inflammation to weight gain. But is the fear justified, or is this just another case of *fad* nutrition misinformation running wild? Press past the noise and read the scientific evidence below to bust some myths and get to the bottom of what is *cooking* with seed oils!

"What are seed oils?"

Seed oils are vegetable oils extracted from seeds of different plants. These oils are commonly used in cooking and salad dressings, but also in ultra-processed foods such as packaged desserts, chips, and ready-to-eat meals. Like all oils, seed oils provide important essential fats your body needs for vitamin absorption and satiety. Seed oils have both heart-healthy omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. Below are the most common seed oils:

- Canola, soybean, sunflower, corn, safflower, grapeseed, sesame, flaxseed, chia, and peanut oil
- Fun fact: Rutgers Dining Services cooks mainly with 100% olive oil, 100% canola oil, or a blend of the two.



"Omega-6 fats cause inflammation"

Though linked to inflammation in excess, omega-6s are vital and beneficial in moderation. The real issue with many seed oils? Their skewed omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. Consuming too much omega-6 compared to omega-3 can throw this off balance. To improve the ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fats, incorporate more omega-3s instead of eliminating omega-6s. To embrace diverse healthy fats into your diet, try:

- More Omega-3 food sources: Fatty fish (tuna, salmon, mackerel) and plant-based options (avocado, nuts, seeds).
- At the dining hall, try baked salmon with vegetables for a quick, nutritious meal.
- Top your salad with a drizzle of olive oil and flaxseeds for added crunch and healthy fat.



"Seed oils are toxic."

Online claims of "toxic" seed oils miss the bigger picture, according to scientific reviews. Seed oils *themselves* are not inherently bad; they are often just bystanders in ultra-processed foods packed with refined carbs, salt, and sugar—the *real* dietary villains that can lead to health issues when overconsumed. Experts emphasize the importance of a balanced diet by cutting back on ultra-processed foods, not single ingredients.

Fuel your body with facts, not fear

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References: *Understanding Seed Oils*. Available at: <https://www.eatright.org/health/essential-nutrients/fats/understanding-seed-oils>. Accessed on: 4/1/25. *Rutgers Dining Services*. Available at: <https://food.rutgers.edu/>. Accessed on: 4/1/25. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at: [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/). Accessed on: 4/1/25.