

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Weight Loss Oil?

The ads are in the magazines now - a new oil that is supposed to help you lose weight. It's definitely pricy if you find it, over five dollars for a bottle the size of a single soda. But for those who desperately want to lose weight, it surely is tempting. The big question of course is "Does *Enova* work?"

The claim is that this oil is not stored as fat in the body, so we can eat it, cook with it, and still lose the pounds. The fine print of the claim is that *more* of it is burned as energy, instead of being packed onto our hips. But if you read the nutrition label, you'll find that it has the same number of calories! So what gives? Is it for real?

Well, yes, and no. It is really a polyunsaturated oil. It is made from canola and soy oils. It looks and smells and tastes like regular oil. You can cook with it, except that it will smoke and burn at a lower temperature than regular oil. So don't plan on deep-frying the turkey in it! If you do fry or saute, keep the temperature lower than usual.

While it is made from regular soy and canola oil, it is slightly different. Most oil has three fatty acids tied together. This oil only has two. It tastes normal to our bodies, and gets absorbed normally into our bodies. But once it gets inside, our bodies don't know quite how to handle it. So to get rid of it, the body sends it to the liver to be burned as energy, instead of sending to our hips or legs.

Some research has been done. There are suggestions that it does result in slightly greater weight loss for people who used it in a diet. It does not prevent the absorption of vitamins the way *Olestra* does. Some enthusiastic reports say it helps cut

appetite, and might even help lower blood triglycerides (fat in the blood). It has been used in Japan for several years, but the studies here have not yet been longer than 6 months, and the number of men who participated was not large. So, while it looks good, it's not yet a sure thing.

On the other hand, it does have a lot of trans fat, at least four times as much as other vegetable oils. The evidence is pretty strong that trans fats do promote cancer. That's why the amount of trans fat must be on all food labels starting next January. If you only ate a couple of teaspoons of it a day, that probably wouldn't make any difference to your body. But if you exchanged all the oils in your diet for this new oil, you could be getting a significant amount of a known problem ingredient.

Plus, while we know that omega 3 fatty acids are beneficial, this new oil has much more omega 6 fatty acids. These are not beneficial, and the recommendations for health are to get more omega 3s, not less.

So, it does have some good points, and like most things, also has some bad points. If you can afford the expense, and you don't use a whole lot, it probably won't do you any harm. But the more you use, the more likely it is that you'll accumulate enough trans fat and omega 6 fatty acids to cause more problems.

The solution? Use less oil, no matter what kind you use. Eating less oil will cut calories and help control weight. Olive and canola oils are known to be healthy for our hearts, and much easier on the pocketbook too. Always keep your eye on the label to watch out for those trans fats. They're definitely the bad ones.

This week's recipe needs no added oil. Get lean chops, and trim off as much fat as you can to cut the fat even more. Serve with a green salad and whole grain bread.

Tomato-Basil Pork Chops

4 lean, center cut pork chops (1 ¼ lb)

1 C tomato-vegetable juice

1 tsp dried basil, or 2 Tbsp fresh, chopped

¼ tsp coarsely ground black pepper

Trim all visible fat from chops. In large frying pan brown chops without adding any fat or oil. When browned, add basil, pepper and juice. Cover tightly and simmer 40 minutes, until tender. Turn meat once in pan, and add a few tablespoons of water or more juice if necessary to prevent sticking and burning.

For less salt, use no-salt-added tomato vegetable juice.

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