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Javier Menendez of the Catalan Institute of Oncology along with Antonio Segura-Carretero from the University of Granada and colleagues tested phenolic fractions of extra-virgin oil in two cultured human breast cancer cell lines, and left some cells untreated as controls.

The team found that fractions containing polyphenols known as lignans and secoiridoids triggered programmed death in cells over expressing HER2 protein.

"Our findings reveal for the first time that all the major complex phenols present in extra-virgin olive oil drastically suppress overexpression of the cancer gene HER2 in human breast cancer cells," Dr Menendez wrote.

Extra virgin olive oil is produced by pressing olives without the use of heat or chemicals. This retains phytochemicals lost in the refinement process.

When buying olive oil you will want to obtain high quality extra virgin oil. The oil that comes from the first "pressing" of the olive, is extracted without using heat.

It called the "cold press". The less the olive oil is "treated", the closer to its natural state, the better the oil. If the olive oil meets all the criteria, it can be designated as "extra virgin".

Although the authors speculated in their introduction to the article that the intake of significant amounts of olive oil might be responsible in part for the association observed between the consumption of a Mediterranean diet and a reduction in breast cancer risk, they note that, "the active phytochemicals (ie lignans and secoiridoids) exhibited tumoricidal (tumour killing) effects against cultured breast cancer cells at concentrations that are unlikely to be achieved in real life by consuming olive oil".

However, they add that "these findings, together with the fact that that humans have safely been ingesting significant amounts of lignans and secoiridoids as long as they have been consuming olives and extra-virgin oil, strongly suggest that these polyphenols might provide an excellent and safe platform for the design of new anti breast-cancer drugs".

It still makes much sense to take that "extra virgin" olive oil as regularly as you can. It is safe and it really does not cost that much.

Datuk Dr Rajen M. is a pharmacist with a doctorate in holistic medicine. Email him at health@po.jaring.my

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YOUR HEALTH: Drops of Jupiter

HOMER called it "liquid gold". In ancient Greece, athletes ritually rubbed it all over their bodies. Its mystical glow illuminates history.

Drops of it seeped into the bones of dead saints and martyrs through holes in their tombs.

ADAM'S BUDGET	
Income (RM)	Expenses (RM)
Salary	800
Gifts from family	200
Adm	100
Transportation	50
Car maintenance	400
Gifts to family	100
Food	400
Travel	400
Car maintenance	200
Education	500
Shopping & entertainment	200
Total income	2,000
Total expenses	2,000

YOUR MONEY: Owning your dream house

AFTER their honeymoon in Bali, Adam and Aida were back home.

They had such a good time there but now it's time for them to live as husband and wife and it will take some adjustments.



No price too high for a satisfied palate

The gloom and doom of a possible economic meltdown will not stop Chinese Malaysian in the city from dining out for what is arguably the most important dinner of the year, writes CHAI MEI LING

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You're so beautiful to me



TECH

Thingamajiggy: Enjoy the wash



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Mak yong – the road ahead



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