



# Oleic Acid

## Function:

Oleic acid is the most common monounsaturated fatty acid in human cells. Oleic acid is incorporated into cell membrane phospholipids, where it is important for proper membrane fluidity. Hormone responsiveness, infectivity of pathogens, mineral transport and immune competence are affected by membrane fluidity.

Oleic acid is a major energy source for cells. Oleic acid is catabolized to acetyl groups used for energy (ATP) production and biosynthesis of many essential metabolites.

Oleic acid is obtained by cells from endogenous biosynthesis or from serum triglycerides. Biosynthesis of fatty acids (like oleic acid) utilizes the same enzymes responsible for elongation of other fatty acids which are precursors for eicosanoids (prostaglandins). Thus, deficient oleic acid status may also indicate deficient eicosanoid production, signifying a need for essential fatty acids.

## Deficiency Symptoms:

No deficiency symptoms are clearly defined for oleic acid since a dietary intake is not absolutely essential. Monounsaturated fat intake may be beneficial for reducing high blood cholesterol levels. A need for oleic acid may possibly reflect a need for essential fatty acids (linoleic acid) or omega-3 fatty acids (alpha linolenic acid, EPA and DHA).

## Repletion Information:

Dietary sources rich in oleic acid include:

Canola Oil	Olive Oil
Avocado Oil	Almond Oil
Avocados	High Oleic Safflower Oil

Although some margarines and shortenings are high in monounsaturated fats, a considerable amount is in the form of trans-monosaturated isomers (elaidic acid). Reductions in these foods are recommended to improve oleic acid status.

No RDA exists for oleic acid. No overt toxicity for fats rich in oleic acid is known, except for a laxative effect when consumed in large amounts (>50-100 grams per serving). Daily doses of 1-2 tablespoons of oleic-rich oils (olive, canola, avocado) are usually adequate to add significant dietary amounts of oleic acid.

Although flaxseed oil (edible linseed oil) contains little oleic acid, it is an excellent source of the essential fatty acids, linoleic acid and linolenic (omega-3) acid. Daily doses of 1-2 tablespoons per day will provide sufficient essential fatty acids to prevent essential fatty acid deficiencies.