

Nutritionist Sakshi Lalwani Debunks Myths on Palm Oil, Labels and Everyday Nutrition

Category: Business

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With growing confusion around which cooking oils are truly healthy, the ongoing podcast series aims to help Indian households make informed, science-based choices. An episode that features nutritionist Sakshi Lalwani, who clarifies everyday concerns about cooking oil selection, label reading and safe cooking practices. The episodes blend relatable food

conversations with evidence-led insights on fats, nutrition and the important role palm oil plays in Indian kitchens.



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Episode Highlights

In the first Episode, Sakshi explains the basics of palm oil, a plant-based oil extracted from the fruit of the oil palm tree. She breaks down how palm olein is naturally trans-fat free, stable at high temperatures, and contains Vitamin E tocotrienols and, the red palm oil contains beta-carotene, a source of provitamin A. She highlights palm oil's balanced fatty acid mix (around 50% saturated, 40% monounsaturated and 10% polyunsaturated fats) and emphasizes that smart cooking habits, not the elimination of any one oil, are key to healthier meals.

In the next Episode, she unfolds the increasing appearance of "No Palm Oil" labels and explains how these tags are largely marketing-led, designed to create a perception of being healthier without reflecting true nutritional value. She advises listeners to look beyond front labels, check the ingredients list, and understand what oils are used as a replacement when palm oil is removed.

What Science Says About Palm Oil

The series highlights that palm oil, when used as part of a balanced diet, contains beneficial compounds such as tocotrienols and carotenoids (in red palm oil), which are powerful antioxidants. Food science shows that palm oil is stable at high temperatures, resistant to oxidation, neutral in flavour, has a long shelf life, less chances of forming harmful compounds as compared to other vegetable oils, and is naturally trans-fat free and does not need to go through the process of partial hydrogenation. It also absorbs less oil into food, leading to crisp and evenly fried dishes.

Aligned With ICMR Dietary Guidelines

Sakshi reinforces the ICMR–NIN Dietary Guidelines (2024), which recommend keeping visible fats to 25–30 g per person per day and rotating different plant-based oils to maintain a balanced fatty acid profile. Within this approach, palm oil is positioned as one of several suitable options for everyday Indian cooking.

Supporting India's Edible Oil Goals: NME0–OP

The episodes also briefly reference India's broader edible oil needs. Under the Government of India's National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NME0–OP), multiple states are expanding oil palm cultivation due to its high productivity, yielding 5–8 times more oil per hectare compared to many other oilseeds crops, helping strengthen domestic supply and reduce reliance on imports.

Understanding 'No Palm Oil' Labels

The conversation also aligns with recent views from industry bodies such as IFBA and OTAI, which have noted that “No Palm Oil” claims can mislead consumers. The episodes encourage shoppers to prioritise the **overall nutrient profile**, ingredient quality, rather than relying on a claim on the front of a pack.

Link to Episode 5: www.instagram.com/p/DQx7TR7gZH6/

Link to Episode 6: www.instagram.com/p/DRmZs1TgSH9/

About the Series

This is a six-episode podcast series by the Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) designed to address misinformation and share scientific facts about palm oil in a simple, relatable way.

Each episode brings expert voices and everyday perspectives to topics like nutrition, health, and sustainability helping listeners replace myths with understanding. With these conversations, MPOC hopes to encourage balanced, fact-based discussions and highlight palm oil's rightful place as a versatile, nutritious, and sustainably produced edible oil.

