

How to Know When Flax Is Rancid

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By **A.J. Andrews** Updated December 09, 2018



Rancidity degrades flax's wealth of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, and it alters the taste, aroma and appearance of the seeds and oil. Flax is sensitive to heat -- it starts breaking down at 225 degrees Fahrenheit -- and starts oxidizing when exposed to light for more than a few hours. Rely on your sense of taste, smell and sight to determine rancidity, and use expiration dates as a guideline.

Sight

Fresh flaxseed oil has a clear, uniform, golden color. Flaxseed oil might contain particulates of ground flax seeds.

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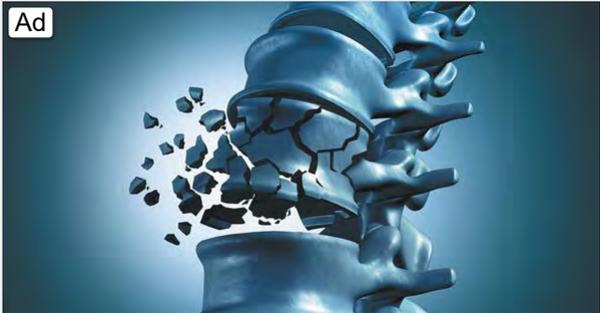
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beneficial class of phytoestrogen, and their presence is normal if the label is marked "high-lignan." Fresh flaxseeds have hard, brown or golden-yellow coats free of blemishes, cracks and discoloration. To check for rancidity, pour a tablespoon or two of flaxseed oil in a wine glass and hold it up to the light while tilting it slightly, similar to how you gauge the color of wine. If you notice haziness instead of translucence or a dark-brown or dark-yellow color -- a few shades deeper than golden -- you have rancid flaxseed oil. Rancid flaxseeds have discolored, cracked, soft or otherwise damaged seed coats.

Smell

With a crisp, mild nuttiness redolent of raw sunflower or sesame seeds, fresh flaxseed oil gives an impression of lightness when inhaled. Although you might not detect the hints of sunflower and sesame unless you have a sensitive palate, a clean nuttiness always stands out in the aroma. To check the aroma of flaxseed oil, pour a few tablespoons in a wine glass -- the shape makes subtle nuances in aroma more perceptible. Place your nose in the wineglass and inhale deeply. Rancid flaxseed oil has a burnt and bitter odor most people generally describe as "off." "Cooked" also describes the odor of rancid flaxseed oil, a smell similar to that of used frying oil. Flaxseeds might or might not have an odor, depending on the degree of rancidity. However, any smell that deviates from nutty and leans toward bitter or burned indicates rancidity.



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Taste

Fresh flaxseed tastes like it smells -- clean, crisp and mildly nutty. Conversely, rancid flaxseed tastes bitter, burnt and assertive. To taste flaxseed oil to check for rancidity, coat the back of a spoon with the oil and let the excess drip off. Rub the back of the spoon over your tongue, making sure it touches the entire surface, and rub your tongue on the roof of your mouth. If testing flaxseeds, chew a few and check for a burnt or bitter flavor.

Flaxseed Storage Tips and Shelf Life

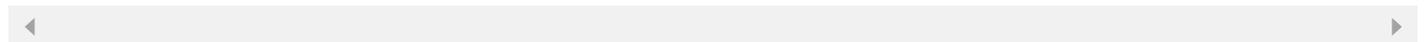
Store flaxseed oil and capsules in dark containers to minimize their contact with light. Store the containers in the refrigerator or a dark cupboard; let the oil sit at room temperature for 10 minutes if you want to warm it up before using. Grind flaxseeds as needed; ground flaxseeds immediately start oxidizing as you grind them, and they don't store well. Flaxseed has a shelf life of one year when stored in a dark container in a dark area. Never cook flax or store it above room

temperature, and check the expiration date before using. To check flax softgels for rancidity, slice the tips from several capsules and squeeze the oil into the glass.

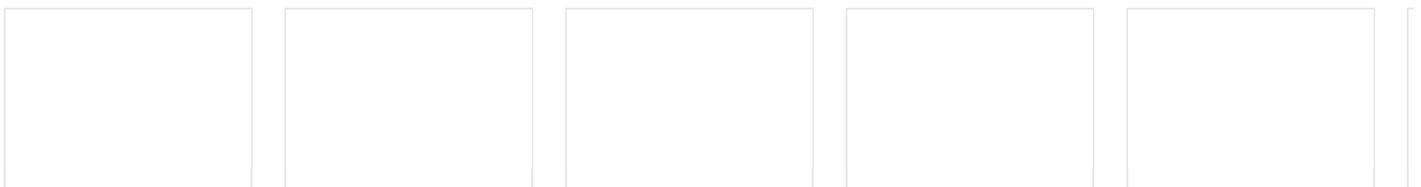


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How to Detect Spoiled Fish Oil

By **Chris Daniels** Updated December 17, 2018



Omega-3 fats are essential polyunsaturated fatty acids that can help your body fight inflammation and lower the risk for diseases such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and autoimmune diseases. Fish oil provides your body with EPA and DHA, two omega-3 fats that may be in short supply in your diet. However, fish oil could easily turn rancid. Not only is rancid fish oil less effective, it may also make you sick.

Open the bottle and smell the remaining fish oil capsules. A fishy, sour or otherwise off odor indicates rancidity. Throw out the capsules if there is a such a smell.

Inspect fish oil capsules. The capsule should be a clear with a light golden color and the coating should be clear and even. The coating should be springy but not soft. Cloudiness of the oil or capsules, splotchiness or a soft capsule indicate spoilage. Do not take any capsule with these conditions.

Check the expiration date on your fish oil. Discard any fish oil capsules that are out of date.

Take a capsule with a glass of water. If you experience an unpleasant aftertaste, it is a sign of spoilage. A high quality fish oil will have minimal taste. Avoid supplements with strong flavors that may mask rancid oil.

Buy fish oil capsules or other forms of fish oil only from reputable, high quality suppliers. A Norwegian study published in 2010 found that 95 percent of 113 over-the-counter fish oil supplements contained a high proportion of rancid oil and did not meet quality standards.

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