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Jan Roberts has been taking olive leaf extract for the past two years and says it keeps her healthy and active. Picture: Cahun Robertson Source: The Advertiser

AUSTRALIANS are turning to a new natural remedy for healthy hearts and immune systems - olive leaf extract.

Makers say the extract, made by crushing fresh olive leaves, is packed with powerful antioxidants.

Anti-ageing physician Dr Stephen Hedges says he often recommends the extract to patients.

"We all know olive oil is good and olives are good, but the olive leaf itself has the highest concentration of antioxidants," Dr Hedges said.

"Olive leaf extract has about 400 per cent more antioxidants than vitamin C and at least double green tea."

He said those antioxidants "mopped up" free radicals that could cause damage in the body.

The extract could be taken to help with numerous health issues, including joint pain and circulation.

Dr Hedges said the extract was more traditionally used to boost immunity.

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"It's been around for hundreds of years and anecdotally has been used to help general wellbeing."

He said it was likely the extract was becoming more popular because people were now more aware of the benefits to be had.

Clinical trials had shown that it supports cardiovascular health by maintaining normal blood pressure and blood triglyceride levels.

Seacliff Park resident Jan Roberts, 69, began taking olive leaf extract after it was recommended by a friend for her hip pain about two years ago.

"The pain disappeared after a couple of weeks," Mrs Roberts said.

"I take 7ml in the morning and another 7ml after a meal at night.

"I exercise five times a week and I seem to be able to keep going even though I'm nearly 70."