

Coconut oil



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Coconut oil is a popular nutritional oil derived from the flesh of matured coconuts. Coconuts have long been a primary source of food throughout the tropics and their many industrial and cosmetic applications have made them a valuable commodity. Coconut oil is heat stable, making it suitable for cooking at high temperatures, it's slow to oxidize, resists rancidity and has a shelf life of approximately two years or more (virgin coco creme created through a wet-milling process has an indefinite shelf life). Coconut oil's composition

Coconuts have a variety of health benefits due to their fibre and nutritional content, but it's the oil that makes them a remarkable source of food and medicine. Coconut oil has definitely earned its reputation as the healthiest oil in the world despite the fact that its high saturated fat content was once falsely claimed to be unhealthy. What makes coconut oil different? Oils and fats are composed of molecules known as fatty acids. They are classified either according to saturation or based on molecular length and size of the carbon chain within each fatty acid.

Monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats are an example of the first class. The second classification is based on molecular size or length of the fatty acid's carbon chain. Long chains of carbon atoms consist of each fatty acid with an attached hydrogen atom. There are short chain fatty acids known as SCFA, medium chain fatty acids (MCFA) such as coconut oil and long chain fatty acids (LCFA). Whether unsaturated or saturated, the majority of fats and oils in our diet are composed of long chain fatty acids.

In fact, a majority of the fatty acids commonly consumed are LCFA. Coconut oil is predominantly medium-chain fatty acid (MCFA) and the effects of the

MCFA in coconut oil are distinctly different from the LCFA found in other foods. In fact, the saturated and unsaturated fat in milk, eggs, meat and even in plants and most vegetable oils are made of LCFA. Why is this relevant? It's important because our bodies respond and metabolize each fatty acid differently. The MCFA found in coconut oil makes it special because these fatty acids don't have a negative effect on cholesterol.

In fact, they're known to lower the risk of heart disease and atherosclerosis. There are only few dietary sources of MCFA, and one of the best sources by far is coconut oil. The liver and gall bladder don't need to digest and emulsify MCFA, resulting in instant energy, increased metabolic rate and subsequently greater heat production and increased circulation. Anyone with an impaired fat digestion or removed gallbladder will benefit from coconut oil as this oil is easily digested. Lauric acid Many of coconut oil's health benefits are attributed to its lauric acid.

Lauric acid in the body is converted into monolaurin, a compound that's highly toxic to viruses, bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms because of its ability to disrupt their lipid membranes and virtually destroy them. Monolaurin is effective for treating candida albicans, fungal infections and athlete's foot. It also targets bacterial infections and viruses like measles, influenza, hepatitis C and even HIV—researchers from the Philippines are studying the effectiveness of lauric acid against HIV/AIDS due to its strong antiviral properties.

Moreover, lauric acid is non-toxic, making it a better alternative to modern drugs prescribed for viruses, fungal and bacterial infections. Without lauric acid, monolaurin cannot be produced by the body. Breast milk is the only

other source of lauric acid, which could explain the lower incidence of infections among breast-fed infants. Regular consumption of coconut oil has also been found to boost immunity and reduce the frequency of sickness.

The health benefits of coconut oil

Hair care - The unique fatty acids in coconut oil have a small molecular structure and pass freely into the hair's cell membrane, allowing the oil to penetrate the hair's shaft, which brings out the deep conditioning from within as compared to other conditioners that work from the outside in. Massaging the oil into the scalp can offer relief from dandruff. Dandruff is caused by dry skin or an internal fungal condition that reached the scalp. With regular use, coconut oil can kill the fungus and eliminate dandruff issues. For deep hair conditioning, a teaspoon or two on damp hair left for as long as possible can give a nice shine.

Leave it on overnight and see startling results. Skin care - Coconut oil is an excellent skin conditioner that contains medium-chain triglycerides, naturally occurring fats which deeply penetrate, moisturize and act as a protective barrier against environmental and free radical damage. The oil also provides sun protection by screening 20 per cent of ultraviolet exposure. Coconut oil is rich in antioxidants and the natural microbial and antibacterial agents caprylic and capric acids. Its ability to smooth the skin while infusing with antioxidants make it a perfect anti-aging moisturizer.

Moreover, it contains vitamin E, another antioxidant popular for hastening the recovery of skin abrasions, burns and other trauma. Weight loss - Medium-chain fatty acids found in coconut oil can speed up metabolism faster than long-chain fatty acids because they are easily digested and

converted into energy. In fact, a study reported medium-chain fatty acids to be three times more effective in raising metabolism than long-chain fatty acids, leading researchers to conclude that effective weight loss can be achieved by replacing long-chain fatty acids with medium-chain fatty acids.

Natural remedy for pneumonia - The American College of Chest Physicians found that coconut oil offers pneumonia patients faster and more complete relief from symptoms. This could be a welcome development for many as this means a shortened hospital stay, lower medical expenses and lower exposure for the patient to a hospital environment. Moreover, it's an inexpensive addition to traditional antibiotics and has no known side effects.

Lowers risk of diabetes, heart disease and improves cholesterol levels - In a study of 20 to 40-year-old women, half were instructed to take a 30 ml soybean oil supplement while the other half were instructed to take a 30 ml coconut oil supplement while maintaining a moderate exercise routine over a 12-week period. Results showed that although both groups of women had a decrease in body mass index (BMI), only the women who were taking coconut oil showed a notable decrease in waist circumference, significantly lowering the risk of conditions like type II diabetes and heart disease.

Furthermore, the study also showed that the subjects who experienced an improvement in their cholesterol profile along with higher HDL levels and higher HDL to LDL ratio were the ones taking coconut oil. Those taking soybean oil did not receive the same benefits but reflected a higher total cholesterol as well as higher LDL cholesterol lower, lower HDL cholesterol and a lower HDL to LDL ratio. Assists in bone health and chronic fatigue -

Research has found coconut oil to help prevent osteoporosis because it helps in the nutrient absorption of minerals such as calcium and magnesium – important minerals that fight osteoporosis. Moreover, the medium-chain fatty acids in coconut oil produce energy rather than body fat, thereby improving metabolism and preventing fatigue. The oil has also been shown to destroy organisms in the body that sap its strength and contribute to the condition of fatigue. Alzheimer's Disease – Dr. Mary Newport, after failing to get treatment for her husband's dementia, discovered that coconut oil contained natural medium-chain triglyceride (MCT). The same substance was used in a drug trial her husband failed to qualify for.

So, she gave her husband 1 tbsp. of coconut oil twice a day for a month and a half and saw him recover almost completely. Other benefits:

- Protects against cancer, HIV and other infectious diseases
- Kills bacteria and parasites like tapeworm and liver flukes
- Eases acid reflux and aids in proper bowel function
- Lowers incidence of hemorrhoids
- Heals and relieves intestinal problems
- Soothes earaches
- Deals with symptoms connected with prostate enlargement
- Strengthens the liver and protects against degeneration
- Reduces incidence of epileptic seizures
- Reduces joint and muscle inflammation
- Eases neuropathies and itching from diabetes.

How much oil should be taken? According to researchers, an adult should consume around 3 1/2 tbsp. of coconut oil daily: an amount equal to the MCT a nursing infant would receive in one day. The benefits of coconut oil are derived from the nutritional value of medium-chain fatty acids (MCT's), and the best comparison in nature as to the percentage of MCT consumed in a diet is in human breast milk.

For those who aren't used to having coconut oil in their diet, it's best to start out with a smaller amount and see how the body reacts before following the recommended amount. Does coconut oil have any adverse side effects? Coconut oil has no known side effects. However, if you're used to a low-fat diet, a common adverse reaction would be diarrhea. It's probably not advisable to start with a large amount right away. Spreading the recommended amount over the course of one day and building up to a larger dose can help to avoid unwanted effects.

In coconut-producing countries, it's considered beneficial for pregnant and lactating women to enjoy coconut oil; Westerners used to a low-fat diet, however, are cautioned not to experiment with coconut oil while pregnant if the body is not used to it. If you've been consuming coconut oil regularly with no adverse reactions, there's no reason to discontinue consumption. Read more at <http://www.themindfulword.org/2012/coconut-oil-health-benefits/#XF4RhFfeAcAAu3hx>. 99