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## 5 Reasons You Should Be Using Coconut Oil

By Sylvia Booth Hubbard | Wednesday, 27 Jan 2016 04:32 PM

For years, coconuts and coconut oil were avoided by dietary experts and health professionals because coconut is high in saturated fats. But in the past few years, coconut has enjoyed a renaissance, with some of America's most highly respected doctors advocating coconuts and coconut oil as part of a healthy diet. "Most smart nutritionists never thought coconut was unhealthy," says Ray Sahelian, M.D., author of *Brain Boosters*. "After all, people in the Pacific islands and many parts of the world have been consuming coconuts, sometimes in large amounts, with no apparent adverse effects. Coconuts and coconut oil are healthy additions to one's diet. "Coconuts are nutrient rich," he tells Newsmax Health. "They are a good source of iron, phosphorus, zinc, and other minerals and vitamins. They are also a good source of protein and fiber, while containing few naturally occurring sugars.

"Around 92 percent of coconut fats are saturated," he says. "This has led to the belief that coconut fats are bad for health, particularly in relation to heart disease. Yet most of these saturated fats are medium chain fatty acids whose properties and metabolism are different to those of animal origin."

Renowned natural health expert Dr. Russell Blaylock agrees: "Coconut oil contains a special type of oil known as a medium-chain triglyceride," he tells Newsmax Health. "This substance is processed by the body the same way it uses glucose, but without the bad effects." Numerous studies have revealed that coconut oil may be beneficial in many ways, including:

**Heart health.** A study published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* that analyzed 72 studies did not find a link between saturated fats and heart disease or stroke. On the other hand, some studies have found coconut oil to be heart healthy, including a five-year Sri Lankan study. "Our research has proven that coconut oil in fact does contain — like many others such as olive oil — phenolic anti-oxidants which are known to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease," said Kapila Seneviratne of the University of Kelaniya.

In a randomized clinical Brazilian trial published in *Lipids*, 40 women were given either 2 tablespoons of coconut oil or 2 tablespoons of soybean oil daily. Although their overall cholesterol numbers didn't change significantly, at the end of 12 weeks, those who took coconut oil increased their levels of HDL — "good" cholesterol — and decreased their levels of LDL — "bad" cholesterol — when compared to the group who took soybean oil. Those in the soybean group experienced increases in total cholesterol, with increases in LDL and decreases in HDL.

**Visceral fat.** The same Brazilian trial that found heart benefits from coconut oil, also found it reduced the deep abdominal fat that's implicated in increased risk for cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes. Women participants also experienced reductions in body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference. According to Harvard experts, visceral fat is also linked to breast cancer and gall bladder problems. Other studies have found that coconut oil can reduce hunger, perhaps by changing the way fats are metabolized, and including medium chain fatty acids, such as coconut oil in the diet, reduce total calorie intake.

**Brain health.** A study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* found that coconut juice from young coconut significantly reduced the buildup of proteins in the brain associated with Alzheimer's. Another study, this one published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* had similar results. It found that treating mouse brain cells with coconut oil was protective against the brain-destroying effects of amyloid proteins that build in the brains of Alzheimer's victims.

**Epileptic seizures.** A ketogenic diet (low carb, high fat) helps reduce seizures in epileptic children who are drug-resistant. A randomized, controlled trial published in *The Lancet Neurology* found that the medium chain fats in coconut oil are transformed into ketones in the body, which dramatically reduced the rate of seizures in epileptic children who are resistant to anti-seizure drugs.

**Bacteria and viruses.** Almost 50 percent of the saturated fatty acids in coconut oil is lauric acid, which has been shown to kill common bacteria, such as staphylococcus aureus and the yeast candida albicans. Some health experts advise a technique called oil pulling that reduces dental plaque and bad breath. Simply swish a tablespoon of coconut oil in your mouth for about five minutes every morning and spit out the oil along with the bacteria. When coconut oil is ingested, it forms a compound called monolaurin, which kills bacteria inside the body. Both Dr. Blaylock and health expert Dr. Erika Schwartz, chief medical officer at the Age Management Institute in New York City, recommend taking coconut oil every day. "Take a teaspoon of coconut oil before each meal," Dr. Schwartz tells Newsmax Health. "It will help you digest food properly, cut your appetite, and help your digestive juices absorb the nutrients in your food."

"Coconut oil by itself won't work miracles, but it can add a lot of health benefits as part of a nutritious diet," says Dr. Sahelian.

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