

Coconut oil combats tooth decay

LONDON: Coconut oil is a natural antibiotic that attacks the bacteria causing tooth decay. It could be incorporated into commercial dental care products, say scientists.

Researchers from the Athlone Institute of Technology, Ireland, tested the antibacterial action of coconut oil in its natural state and coconut oil that had been treated with enzymes, in a process similar to digestion. They found that enzyme-modified coconut oil strongly inhibited the growth of most strains of Streptococcus bacteria which commonly inhabit the mouth, including Streptococcus mutans - an acid-producing bug that is a major cause of tooth decay. Damien Brady who is leading the research at Athlone, said: "Dental caries is a commonly overlooked health problem affecting 60-90 per cent of children and the majority of adults in industrialised countries." Additional testing by the Athlone Institute found that enzyme-modified coconut oil was also harmful to the yeast Candida albicans that can cause thrush. IANS