

The healing powers of coconut oil

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The healing powers of coconut oil celebs swear by
(Getty Image)

Here's why coconut oil based products are scoring big with beauty buffs across the world

Everyone is loving coconut oil at the moment. Not only is it great for hair, skin and even teeth, it's an intensive moisturiser with antibacterial properties. You can also use coconut oil for baking and rehydrate with its water. Celeb fans include the Kardashian sisters and actresses Emma Stone and Gwyneth Paltrow, who take their make-up off with the stuff. So it's no surprise sales of coconut products are on the up - stores in the US have posted a 64% increase in sales of coconut products this year.

KEEPS SKIN FLAKE FREE

"Coconut oil, whether used alone or as part of a body oil, lotion or scrub, leaves a silky feel and keeps skin smooth,

elastic and hydrated, thanks to its medium-chain fatty acids and proteins," says skincare expert Margaret Weeds. And because of its molecular -structure, it's easily absorbed - a study in an international journal of dermatology showed that pure virgin coconut oil helped decrease water loss in people with atopic dermatitis. To keep skin flake free, lavish your body with products that has ingredients like coconut butter. For problem dry skin, use a pure, virgin coconut oil - it comes solid at room temperature but warms and melts on body contact, say experts.

GREAT FOR HAIR

Coconut oil penetrates the hair shaft easily because of its small molecular structure. "This means it can hydrate and soften hair, preventing breakage and reducing protein loss," says hairdresser Lee Stafford. "It's also great for scalp health as it has soothing and cooling properties." For an intensive conditioning treatment, warm some perfectly pure coconut oil, then comb through hair and leave in overnight. Coconut water also hydrates your hair and thanks to its potassium, calcium and proteins, it leaves your locks stronger.

COMBATS AGEING

Used in a facial moisturiser, its natural antioxidants help combat ageing by preventing free radical damage. "It also has antibacterial and antimicrobial proper ties, which can help to treat acne and eczema," says skincare expert Katie Torade. Try moisturiser with coconut oil. If you have skin prone to redness, try non-irritating oil products. And for protection from winter, use comfort cream, It combines coconut oil and milk with "anti-cold" Arginine extract.

WHITENS TEETH

Oil pulling - that's pulling, pushing and sucking coconut oil through teeth - is said to help lift off stains and whiten. It's antibacterial too. "Bacteria in the mouth are covered with a lipid membrane. When it comes into contact with coconut oil, they naturally adhere to each other," explains nutritionist Alex Thompson

CLEAN UP

"Coconut oil is a great cleanser because it's easily removed, clears congested pores and isn't greasy , plus it contains around 50% lauric acid, an antimicrobial fatty acid," says Weeds. For the face, try coconut cleansers. It's designed for sensitive skin - even if you're prone to flushing and rosacea - and the oil helps break down waterproof mascara. In the shower, there are hydrating skin scrubs with poppy seeds and sugar to exfoliate, that is recommended for very dry skin. Of course, you can always lie back and bathe in coconut oil, so your skin is soaked with intense, skin-healthy nutrients.

MAKE-UP YOUR MIND

More and more make-up products are incorporating coconut oil and water in their formulas. There are foundations with coconut oil. Use coconut water to replenish your skin's moisture. Look for eye shadows containing coconut oil to nourish the skin on your eyelids so they don't look crepey. Coconut oil also helps soften, protect and smooth lashes. - *Daily Mirror*