



Think sharper *with coconut oil!*

There is much research pointing to the fact that coconut oil may be very important for good brain function. This has become more obvious in studies that have been centred on finding a cure for Alzheimers and Parkinsons diseases.

Cholesterol is essential for good brain function. A study on the role of nutrition in Alzheimers's published in the European Journal of Internal Medicine states: "The brain represents only 2% of the body's total mass, but contains 25% of the total cholesterol. Cholesterol is required everywhere in the brain as an antioxidant, an electrical insulator (in order to prevent ion leakage), as a structural scaffold for the neural network, and a functional component of all membranes. Cholesterol is also utilized in the wrapping and synaptic delivery of the neurotransmitters. It also plays an important role in the formation and functioning of synapses in the brain."

Several other studies have shown that Alzheimers patients have a lack of cholesterol in their brains. Cholesterol deficiency has also been noted in patients who suffer from Parkinsons and dementia. On the other hand, people who enjoy good health at the age of 85 and above have consistently shown

good cholesterol levels – and enjoy better memory and less dementia.

Here's where coconut oil comes in. Brain tissue is loaded with complex forms of fats. Coconut oil supports thyroid function greatly, and thyroid governs brain development. An experiment done as far back as 1978, showed that pregnant mice that were given coconut oil, had babies who had superior brain development.

Why would it be better than the other oils? Well, for one it is highly saturated. This means that it is resistant to lipid peroxidation. This process happens in polyunsaturated oils, which get oxidized very fast and become rancid. Coconut oil on the other hand, has a natural, unrefined shelf life of more than two years, if stored properly. Lipid peroxidation has been linked to nerve cell degeneration found in people with Alzheimers disease.

Coconut oil also gives your brain cells with ketones. This is a high energy fuel that nourishes brain cells. Ordinarily brain cells are fed by glucose, but in patients who develop insulin resistance, their cells slowly get less amounts of glucose, which causes their cells to starve and die. Our body naturally produces ketones from the fat that is stored in our body if we are starving, so that our brains

cells continue to get nourishment. But coconut oil can ensure that brain cells get ketones all the time, ensuring that they are nourished. Coconut oil is the richest source of Medium Chain Triglycerides (MCT). A study done in 2004 took MCTs from coconut oil and gave them to Alzheimer's patients while a control group took a placebo. Cognitive tests done just ninety minutes later showed a significant increase ketone body beta-hydroxybutyrate (beta-OHB). Higher ketone values were associated with greater improvement in paragraph recall in patients who had the MCT in every single patient – showing that brain function is positively impacted by MCTs.

Another reason why this oil could be better for you is that it could help you reach and sustain high levels of the "good" cholesterol HDL in your blood. A study published in the American Journal of Cardiology, February 2011 – showed that men with higher HDL levels lived longer. High HDL is achieved by having a diet that has adequate amounts of saturated fats. Not by having a low-fat diet.

So the new understanding is that people suffering from neurological disorders should be adding more of these kinds of fats into their diet. For Alzheimers patients, the new research indicates that there would be a great benefit in adding coconut oil. Do not consume hydrogenated coconut oil – all of the benefits are destroyed in this process, and the hydrogenation makes it more prone to oxidation and will do you more harm. Other good oils to add to your diet in adequate quantities are: butter and ghee, as well as fish oil, flaxseed oil or krill oil. In the last categories, it's not an either/or consumption. If you are taking oils that are high in Omega 6- like the ghee or coconut oil, it's equally important that you ALSO take the Omega 3 oils like flaxseed or cod liver.