

This oil is a men's health powerhouse



Coconut oil is one of the richest sources of saturated fat, a fat long considered to be unhealthy. Yet coconut oil is being touted as one of the healthiest oils you can consume. What's wrong with this picture?

Unlike most other sources of saturated fat, including vegetable and seed oils and animal fat, which consist mainly of long-chain triglycerides, coconut oil is made up primarily of medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs). It turns out that chain size makes all the difference when it comes to your health.

Compared with long-chain triglycerides, the medium variety are absorbed and metabolized by the body differently. These differences are part of the reason coconut oil has been credited with a wide range of health benefits. Here are 12 of them:

It makes you less fat

Excess belly fat or abdominal obesity is a significant risk factor for heart disease and diabetes. Among men, a waist size of 37 to 40 inches is considered to be overweight while more than 40 inches is obese. Research findings have suggested that use of coconut oil can reduce waist circumference in men, thus lowering their risk of heart disease and diabetes.

In a 2011 study reported in *ISRN Pharmacology*, 20 obese men took 2 tablespoons of virgin coconut oil (divided into 3 doses) daily 30 minutes before each meal for four weeks. Use of the coconut oil was associated with a significant reduction (2.86 centimeters) in waist circumference. The authors concluded that "[Virgin coconut oil] is efficacious for WC [waist circumference] reduction especially in males and it is safe for use in humans."

It reduces prostate size

Use of coconut oil may be helpful in managing benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), also known as enlarged prostate. In a study in the *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, researchers reported on a comparison of coconut oil, saw palmetto lipid extracts, and sunflower oil in rodents with an enlarged prostate. Rodents were treated for 14 days with either soy oil (controls), saw palmetto extract, coconut oil, or sunflower oil. At the end of the study, the prostates of the rodents were weighed. Coconut oil, sunflower oil, and saw palmetto lipid extract all significantly reduced the increase in prostate gland weight. Both coconut oil and saw palmetto lipid extract contain healthy concentrations of lauric and myristic acids, which are believed to be responsible for the benefits seen in this study.

It boosts your testosterone levels

In a study appearing in *Phytotherapy Research*, 40 rats were assigned to receive one of the following: soybean, olive, coconut, or grapeseed oil for 60 days. At the end of two months, the researchers conducted a number of tests, which showed that use of coconut oil was associated with the least amount of oxidative stress, a factor that contributes to disease and aging. The highest testicular levels of antioxidants were seen in the animals given coconut oil or olive oil, and coconut oil was associated with significantly higher levels of testosterone.

It reduces hunger

Research suggests that the medium-chain triglycerides in coconut oil are a reason why the oil can reduce hunger. When you ingest coconut oil, the MCTs go from the digestive tract straight to the liver, where they are used for energy or transformed into ketone bodies. These ketone bodies have an appetite-suppressing effect. Two small studies have looked at this effect. In one study, men were given varying amounts of MCTs and long-chain triglycerides. Those who ate the most MCTs consumed an average of 256 fewer calories per day. In the other study, men who ate the most MCTs at breakfast consumed significantly fewer calories at lunch.

It helps prevent Alzheimer's disease

The study that highlights the possible benefits of using coconut oil for Alzheimer's disease did not use coconut oil but a drink that contained medium-chain triglycerides. The 20 individuals in the study had Alzheimer's disease or mild cognitive impairment. Half of the participants received a placebo. Within 90 minutes of treatment, individuals in the coconut oil group who had less severe cognitive problems showed measurable improvement in cognitive abilities.

It can help heal wounds

Application of coconut oil to wounds can speed up the healing process via three mechanisms: the oil improves the activity of antioxidant enzymes, stimulates the ability of collagen (a protein abundant in skin) to repair tissue, and accelerates re-epithelialization (the growth of epithelial cells over damaged skin).

The ability of coconut oil to heal wounds was seen in a study in the *Indian Journal of Pharmacology*, in which rats with burn wounds were treated with one of the following: no treatment (controls), silver sulphadiazine (standard treatment), coconut oil, or coconut oil plus silver sulphadiazine. The animals who were treated with the

combination of coconut oil and silver sulphadiazine showed the greatest amount of healing. The authors concluded that coconut oil "is an effective burn wound healing agent."

It improves cholesterol levels

Use of coconut oil can improve cholesterol levels, and specifically the ratio of bad-to-good (low-density lipoprotein vs high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol. This effect was seen in a double-blind clinical trial appearing in *Lipids*, in which 40 obese women were given either soybean oil or coconut oil over a three-month period. All of the participants followed a low-calorie diet and walked for 50 minutes per day.

At the end of the study period, the women in both groups showed a reduction in body mass index, but only the women in the coconut oil group had a reduction in waist circumference. The women in the soybean oil group experienced increases in bad and total cholesterol and a reduction in good cholesterol. Women in the coconut oil group, however, did not have any changes in cholesterol. The authors concluded that "supplementation with coconut oil does not cause dyslipidemia [abnormal levels of lipids and/or fats] and seems to promote a reduction in abdominal obesity."

It can build bone strength

Coconut oil appears to help promote bone health and prevent damage associated with osteoporosis. Approximately 2 million men in the United States have osteoporosis, and 12 million more are at risk. In an animal study, researchers gave virgin coconut oil to osteoporotic rat models in their diet for six weeks. Compared with the untreated animals, those that received coconut oil showed improvements in factors associated with better bone health, such as glutathione peroxidase and superoxide dismutase levels.

It has anti-inflammatory, pain-relieving, and fever-reducing properties

Coconut oil has demonstrated not only an ability to reduce inflammation, but also relieve pain and reduce fever. Researchers used virgin coconut oil to evaluate the impact of the oil on inflammation, pain, and fever in animal models. The coconut oil showed moderate anti-inflammatory effects against edema (fluid accumulation) and an inhibitory effect in chronic inflammation. Coconut oil also was shown to have a moderate pain-relieving effect and to reduce fever.

It can fight ulcers

When compared with the drug sucralfate, coconut milk (which contains coconut oil components) can be as effective in the management of ulcers. Male rats with ulcers were used in a study that compared coconut milk and coconut water. The healing of coconut milk was similar to that of sucralfate, reducing the ulcer area by 56 percent. The authors noted that coconut milk and coconut water showed an ability to protect ulcerated gastric mucosa.

It may treat fungal infections

Virgin coconut oil was used in a study against one of the more common fungal infections, *Candida*. The study team looked at the susceptibility of coconut oil and fluconazole (a common antifungal medication) against 52 isolates of *Candida*. *C. albicans* had the greatest susceptibility to coconut oil (100%) and *C. krusei* had the highest resistance. The authors concluded that "coconut should be used in the treatment of fungal infections in view of emerging drug-resistant *Candida* species."

It can protect the skin against sunburn

Coconut oil has a sun protective factor (SPF) of 8, according to a study published in *Pharmacognosy Research*. Although this is lower than the minimum recommended SPF (15-30), choosing a sunscreen that contains coconut oil can be a wise choice, since it also helps hydrate the skin and keep it soft. Avoid sunscreen products that contain PABA (para-aminobenzoic acid), benzophenones, octyl-methoxycinnamate, homosalate, 4-methyl-benzylidene camphor, and retinyl palmitate.

How to use coconut oil

There's a link below to the brand I use. You can eat it by the teaspoon, put some in your smoothies, cook with it, add it to your coffee, use it as a shaving oil as well as a salad dressing. You can also use it as a sexual lubricant if need be. I eat a lot of it – probably too much – but the health benefits are amazing. Here are 50 other ways to use coconut oil.

Here's the coconut brand I use

If you're interested, here is the coconut brand I use. It should be solid at room temperature. If it's not, then the health benefits have probably been processed out of it. So make sure it's solid, not liquid at room temp. Avoid MCT Oil, which has a lot of hype at the moment (Bulletproof Coffee etc). Use pure coconut oil not MCT. Here's why.

– Craig Cooper

Join the discussion...

Iris D. Lynch • 10 hours ago

I was going to ask What about women's health?

GLADALLOVER • a day ago

Virgin Coconut Oil is better than they say it is & is an absolute life saver in so many ways! Here's to your health & to you ladies out there in cyberspace, your skin will really thank you after using VCO every day. I have & I don't look anywhere near 69, it works incredibly well & better than anything else that I tried!