

COCONUT OIL –CONCEPTS & MISCONCEPTS

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There is widespread misconception that coconut oil is bad for you because it is said to raise blood cholesterol and cause heart disease. This is based on the study of hydrogenated coconut oil. It is now known that the process of hydrogenation creates "trans fatty acids" (TFAs), which are toxic entities that enter cell membranes, block utilization of essential fatty acids (EFAs) and impede cell functionality. TFAs also cause a rise in blood cholesterol. These substances are not present in natural coconut oil. In other words, a study based on hydrogenated coconut oil has no relevance to the non-hydrogenated coconut milk or coconut oil that you eat.

Another reason people believe coconut oil must be bad for you is misguided association: They says that coconut oil has saturated fat and "saturated fats are bad for you. Leading scientists now recognize that just as there is good cholesterol, there are also good saturated fats.



Composition of Coconut Oil: Coconut oil consists of more than ninety percent of saturated fats, with traces of few unsaturated fatty acids, such as monounsaturated fatty acids and polyunsaturated fatty acids.

Fats are classified as short-, medium- or long-chain based on the number of carbon molecules they contain. Nearly two-thirds of the saturated fat in coconut oil consists of medium-chain fatty acids. They are absorbed directly through the portal vein to the liver, where they are immediately available to the body. Most of the saturated fat in coconut oil is easily digestible and converted into quick energy. And these types of fatty acids are less likely to cause obesity because they are immediately used by the body and have no

opportunity to be stored.

Nearly 50% of the fatty acid in natural coconut oil is lauric acid, which converts to the fatty acid monolaurin in the body. Lauric acid has adverse effects on a variety of microorganisms including bacteria, yeast, fungi, and enveloped viruses. It destroys the lipid membrane of such enveloped viruses as HIV, measles, Herpes simplex virus (HSV-1), influenza and cytomegalovirus (CMV).

Its usefulness in treating AIDS is currently under investigation. It is a main component of human breast milk and helps protect children from illness during infancy.

The health benefits of coconut oil include hair care, skin care, stress relief, maintaining cholesterol levels, weight loss, increased immunity, proper digestion and metabolism, relief from kidney problems, heart diseases, high blood pressure, diabetes, HIV and cancer, dental care, and bone strength. These benefits of coconut oil can be attributed to the presence of lauric acid, capric acid and caprylic acid, and its properties such as antimicrobial, antioxidant, antifungal, antibacterial, soothing, etc.

In other words: not only does coconut oil not cause heart problems, it is good for you. Coconut oil is a "functional food," defined as a food that "provides a health benefit over and beyond the basic nutrients.

Virgin coconut oil

Virgin coconut oil is also made in the country from the milk extracted from raw kernel. This is done on a small scale by the traditional method which is now partially mechanized or on a large scale by adopting wet processing technology. Coconut milk is fermented and then by mechanical process, water is separated from oil. No heating or application of sunlight or dryer is done for the process. The virgin coconut oil is free from Trans fatty acid, high in medium chain fats (MCFA) known as lauric acid, which is identical to special group of fats found human breast milk and also rich in vitamin-E. High quality of this oil makes it ideal massage oil for babies and also for skin and hair applications.

BUT

Always remember that moderate eating is healthy. Excess eating without proper exercises and utilization of energy leads to obesity. Those who are already having elevated LDL and Triglycerides, better to reduce the intake of fatty food in any form.