Four Reasons to Love Coconut Oil

By: Michael Ravensthorpe, Natural News

Few foods, with the possible exception of eggs, have had their reputations so completely demolished in the 20th century as coconut oil. Even as late as the 1990s, this edible oil, which is extracted from the kernels or flesh of matured coconuts, continued to be demonized in the media as a great contributor to heart disease due to its significant saturated fat content.

Fortunately, modern society is beginning to understand that the saturated fat present in coconut oil is, contrary to popular belief, actually highly beneficial. This understanding was, in part, due to a growing body of evidence suggesting that populations who consumed large quantities of coconut oil, such as the Tokelauan and Kitavan people of the South Pacific, were among the healthiest people on Earth. This evidence prompted a growing number of scientists to investigate the benefits of coconut oil.

Coconut oil is an unbeatable source of saturated fat

According to *Self*'s "NutritionData," one tablespoon of coconut oil contains 14 grams of total fat, of which 12 grams are saturated. Whereas the saturated fat found in most other foods, such as meat and cheese, is mostly comprised of long-chain triglycerides (LCTs), the saturated fat found in coconut oil is mostly comprised of medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs). Unlike LCTs, which need to be broken down in the intestines before our bodies can use them as fuel, MCTs are metabolized extremely quickly and rarely stored in the body as fat cells. These MCTs are the source of all of the benefits listed below.

Coconut oil can reduce abdominal obesity

Due to its concentrations of MCTs, long-term consumption of coconut oil has actually been linked to weight loss, not weight gain. A Brazilian study published in *Lipids* in 2009, found that women who consumed 30 milliliters of coconut oil daily for a 12 week period experienced a reduction in BMI and waist circumference. A group of women who consumed equal amounts of soybean oil, which contains LCTs, during the same period did not experience the same benefits.

Coconut oil kills bacteria, viruses and fungi

Almost 50% of the MCTs found in coconut oil is lauric acid, a 12-carbon saturated fatty acid that our bodies convert into monolaurin. Monolaurin is one of the natural world's greatest antivirals, antibacterials and antifungals. In fact, Dr. Joseph Mercola claimed that monolaurin can destroy lipid-coated viruses, such as measles, herpes, influenza, most pathogenic bacteria and even HIV. These claims are now being studied by science. One study published in the *Journal of Medicinal Food* in 2007, found that coconut oil is extremely effective at killing *Candida albicans*, a common yeast infection in humans. Another study published in the *Journal of Bacteriology* in 2000 discovered that coconut oil can help kill

Staphylococcus aureus, which is a common cause of skin conditions and respiratory diseases.

Coconut oil can maintain mental health

It is a well-known fact that inadequate amounts of our brain's main fuel supply, glucose, is the leading cause of cognitive disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia. According to researcher Dr. Mary Newport, coconut oil can help prevent these diseases due to the high concentrations of ketone bodies in its MCTs, which function as an alternative fuel source. "Humans do not normally have ketone bodies circulating and available to the brain unless they have been starving for a couple of days or longer, or are consuming a ketogenic (very low carbohydrate) diet, such as Atkins," says Newport. "In Alzheimer's disease, the neurons in certain areas of the brain are unable to take in glucose due to insulin resistance and slowly die off... If these cells had access to ketone bodies, they could potentially stay alive and continue to function."

Sources for this article include:

http://nutritiondata.self.com/facts/fats-and...
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19437058
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