

## 19 Benefits of Coconut Oil

*Source: MSN Health & Fitness*



What's all the buzz about? Can coconut oil really help you lose weight and improve your health? Apparently, yes. Twenty times yes.

You've no doubt noticed that coconut oil is on everyone's lips lately. You may also be aware that it's in their frying pans, their smoothies, their hair, and in a little jar on their nightstand. What underlies coconut oil's recent adoption by the masses is the sheer amount of benefits to mind, body, and soul that it promises. And it's not a marketing spin; a growing body of research shows that adding coconut oil to your diet and your person could be one of the easiest ways to improve your health, well-being, appearance, and even your sex life. Read on to learn about 20 ways a few tablespoons of this near-miraculous stuff can benefit you and yours and then keep going with these 19 Weight-Loss Superfoods You're Not Eating.

### **1. It's a long term, weight loss godsend**

Scientists have known about coconut's ability to help blast fat for decades. A study published in the *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health* back in 1985 proved that a single injection of capric acid (which abounds in coconut oil) resulted in "initially rapid, then a gradual decrease in food consumption and a parallel loss of body weight" in male rats. Further studies have shown that it's the capric acid and other medium chain triglycerides (MCT) in coconut oil can increase 24-hour energy expenditure in humans by as much as 5 percent. Now, burning an extra 100-120 calories per day might not sound like much but over a year, it amounts to at least 36,000 calories. That's more cals than you'd find in over 10 pounds of dangerous and unsightly belly fat.

## **2. It kills bacteria**

Around half of the fatty acids in coconut oil are lauric acid. Lauric acid is particularly good at killing bacteria, viruses, and fungi and, therefore, great in helping you stave off infections when used externally. But when you ingest coconut oil it reacts with enzymes to form a monoglyceride called monolaurin. And guess what? Monolaurin is great for killing harmful pathogens, too! In addition to keeping all kinds of nastiness at bay, both of these substances have been shown to kill the bacteria and very dangerous pathogen, *Staphylococcus Aureus* and the yeast *Candida Albicans*, which is a common source of yeast infections.

## **3. It can be used in the bedroom**

There are many life-enhancing uses for coconut oil but one of the most fun results takes place in the bedroom. You'd use it in there for the same reasons that you'd use it in other rooms in the house: It's yummy, it's organic, it's all natural, and it stops things from sticking. I'm talking about sex, people! Not only does coconut oil feel, taste, and smell good when used to add a little flavor to your sex life, but it also happens to be good for you. It's moisturizing and, as noted above, it's anti-fungal and anti-bacterial, which means it does a great job at preventing yeast infections—unlike riskier foods like whipped cream. As with any oil, coconut oil shouldn't be used with latex condoms because it will weaken the latex, resulting in tears, breaks, and potentially children.

## **4. It can help you build and maintain muscle**

As mentioned above, MCT's in coconut oil are good for upping your body's energy expenditure and burning calories. Here's yet another way this wonder-stuff can help you look better naked. It's great for building muscle! MCTs found in coconut are also used in popular muscle building products like Muscle Milk. But many supplements use processed forms of MCT's. By eating actual coconut oil, you'll benefit from getting your MCT's in their natural and most effective form. Add 3 tablespoons of coconut oil to a muscle building shake daily.

## **5. Coconut oil curbs appetite**

Scientists suspect that coconut oil's interesting effect on hunger may be related to the way the fatty acids in it are metabolized. In a short term study, varying amounts of medium and long chain triglycerides were fed to 6 healthy men. The men eating the most MCTs ate 256 fewer calories per day, on average. In a second short study 14 healthy men discovered that those who ate the most MCTs at breakfast ate significantly fewer calories at lunch. These studies over a significant period of time, adding MCT-rich coconut oil to one's diet could have a very positive effect on weight and body composition. You can also add it to your coffee for a tasty pick-me-up.

## **6. It helps with memory**

A 2004 study published in the journal of *Neurobiology of Aging* demonstrated that the MCT's found in coconut oil improved the memory problems their older subjects were experiencing. All

patients in the study saw a marked improvement in their recall ability after taking the fatty acid. It's thought that this is due to MCT's being absorbed more easily in the body. As they can be accessed in the brain without the use of insulin, they are able to more efficiently fuel brain cells.

## **7. Coconut oil can protect organ function**

Coconut oil may help to clear up and heal urinary (UTI) and kidney infections. See, the MCT's in the oil work as a natural antibiotic by disrupting the lipid coating on bacteria and killing them. A 2014 study showed that Virgin coconut oil protects against liver damage. At least in albino rats. Speaking of protecting organs, did you know that soda is so dangerous because it promotes visceral fat all around your internal organs? Yikes!

## **8. It promotes heart health**

Coconut oil is high in natural saturated fats. That may not sound like a positive but the saturated fats in coconuts work in a different way than those found in animal-derived foods like butter, cream, cheese and meat. Coconut oil increases the healthy cholesterol (known as HDL) in your body, but it also helps to convert the LDL or "bad" cholesterol into good cholesterol. By increasing the HDL's in the body and changing the ratio of HDL to LDL, the saturated fat in coconut oil helps promote heart health and lower the risk of heart disease.

## **9. It gives your pancreas a break**

The MCT's of coconut oil are super easy to digest and as such, they don't need pancreatic enzymes to be broken down. Taking coconut oil actually eases the metabolic strain on the pancreas. In fact, super fat is so easy to digest that it has been known to improve the symptoms of gallbladder disease too. You can improve gallbladder and total body health simply by replace other long-chain fats with coconut oil.

## **10. It's great for your skin and hair**

Studies on individuals with dry skin show that coconut oil can improve the moisture and lipid content of the skin. Coconut oil can also be very protective against hair damage. If you have dandruff or dry hair, coconut oil is chock full of the fatty acids that can improve these conditions. One study shows coconut oil's effectiveness as sunscreen. It's been shown block out about 20 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays.

## **11. It improves digestion**

Coconut oil improves digestion by helping the body to absorb fat-soluble vitamins, calcium, and magnesium. If coconut oil is taken at the same time as omega-3 fatty acids, it can make them doubly effective. Coconut oil can also help improve bacteria and gut health by destroying bad bacteria and candida. Candida imbalance especially can decrease stomach acid which causes inflammation and poor digestion.

## **12. It's good for oral health**

Ever heard of oil pulling? Well before the invention of toothpaste, the act of swishing oil around the mouth was a method of cleansing the mouth of bacteria and for helping to heal the nasty ravages of periodontal disease. An abundance of MCT's is the reason why coconut oil is one of the many effective oils to pull with. Basically, the oil lifts the bacteria from the surfaces within the mouth and that's great because removing oral bacteria greatly reduces your risk of disease around your gums. Experts recommend coconut oil pulling 3 times a week for 20 minutes a day to protect your mouth and its valuable contents.

## **13. It may help balance hormones**

Hormone disruption can cause a litany of problems in men and women. Coconut oil can help in maintaining an important balance of hormones because the lauric acid it contains. A 2012 study conducted in the Philippines has suggested that coconut oil may be an excellent fat to consume during menopause and also may have a positive effect on estrogen levels.

## **14. It helps repair chapped lips**

The minerals in this coconut oil add plenty of moisture to cure the dryness and make your lips soft, smooth, kissable and let's face it, delicious!

## **15. It can prevent and treat cancer**

This coconut oil benefit can occur in two ways: 1. When we digest coconut oil, ketones are produced. Now these ketones contain energy that the body can utilize but tumor cells can't. Tumor cells depend on glucose for energy. That's why it's believed that a ketogenic diet could be a possible component of helping cancer patients recover. 2. As the MCT's digest the lipid walls of bacteria, they also can kill a specific bacteria that has been known as increasing the risk of stomach cancer, helicobacter pylori. Even in studies where cancer is chemically induced, the introduction of coconut oil prevents cancer from developing!

## **16. It can reduce the risk of seizures**

Let's talk about ketones some more because they're pretty darn interesting. The best known therapeutic application of the ketogenic diet is treating drug-resistant epilepsy in children. This diet involves eating very little carbohydrates and large amounts of fat, leading to greatly increased concentrations of ketones in the blood. Researchers have found that this diet can dramatically reduce the occurrence of seizures in epileptic children, even those who haven't had success with multiple different types of drugs.

## **17. It can prevent insulin resistance**

Insulin resistance is the precursor to type 2 diabetes. The term refers to when the body's cells refuse to respond to insulin and therefore, can no longer take in glucose for energy. The pancreas dutifully pumps out more insulin to compensate and creates a cycle of overproduction. That's

when type 2 diabetes can set in. Good news! The MCT's in coconut oil help balance the insulin reactions in the cells because of ketones our bodies produce when we consume it. These ketones take off the strain on the pancreas by giving the body a consistent energy source that is not dependent on glucose reactions. Neato, right?

### **18. It can help prevent Alzheimer's disease**

The digestion of MCT's by the liver creates ketones: a readily accessible energy for the brain. Recent research has shown that the brain actually creates it's own insulin to process glucose and power brain cells. As the brain of an Alzheimer's patient has lost the ability to create its own insulin, the ketones from coconut oil could create an alternate source of energy to help repair brain function. In one 2006 study, consumption of medium chain triglycerides led to immediate improvement in brain function in patients with milder forms of Alzheimer's.

### **19. It can be used to treat inflammation and arthritis**

An Indian study showed that the high levels of antioxidants present in virgin coconut oil actually reduced inflammation and healing arthritis more effectively than leading medications. Another recent study demonstrated that coconut oil harvested with medium (and not high) heat was found to suppress inflammatory cells. It worked as both an analgesic and anti-inflammatory.

As mentioned above, one of the amazing benefits of coconut oil is that it increases absorption of absorb fat-soluble vitamins and minerals in the gut. One of those minerals being calcium. Research with osteoporosis has found that adding coconut oil to the diet increased bone volume and structure in subjects and decreased bone loss due to osteoporosis. But osteoporosis isn't just about calcium: oxidative stress and free radicals are also a cause of the condition. Since coconut oil has such high levels of antioxidants which help fight free radicals, it is a leading natural treatment for the painful and sometimes debilitating condition.