

Title Coconut: The new health food of the 21st century
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Abstract

Because of its high saturated fat content, coconut has been blindly criticized by the medical community and laypersons alike for contributing to the development of heart disease. Coconut oil, however, is not like other fat. It is composed predominately of a special group of saturated fats known as medium-chain triglycerides (MCT). Over the past 40 years research has shown that MCT, derived from coconut oil, possesses unique properties with important nutritional and medical applications. Although MCT are classified as saturated fats they do not contribute to heart disease. Evidence shows they actually protect against it. Coconut oil has a long history of use throughout the world as both a food and a medicine. Coconut oil has been traditionally used to treat a wide variety of health problems ranging from burns to influenza. Studies have shown that those populations that use coconut oil as their primary source of fat have the lowest heart disease rates in the world. These populations also have a low incidence of chronic disease well. Recent medical studies have shown that both coconut oil and MCT can help protect against many common illnesses including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and numerous infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS.