

Coconut oil - a natural cosmetic product

Good for the hair and skin

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Coconut Oil is skin-friendly and has therapeutic applications. The unique feature of coconut oil is its low unsaturation, low viscosity, water-white colour and presence of tocopherols (Vitamin E). It is resistant to the development of rancidity if kept free from moisture.

Coconut Oil (CNO) is of natural origin which is obtained from coconut. It is a gift from mother nature. About one-third of the oil produced goes for edible purpose while the remaining is used in soaps, cosmetics and toiletries. The quality of CNO is judged by its colour, flavour, clarity and appearance.

These parameters depend on the quality of the copra and the process by which the oil is obtained. In fact, one can get different grades of CNO on the basis of the copra quality. Depending on the extraction method, oil of superior natural aroma and flavour with excellent stability can be obtained.

The price of CNO is governed by the grade and the most superior grade is used for edible purposes, as also in cosmetic applications such as hair oil, body oil, etc., which have good market value. The inferior grades of oil are generally used for the manufacture of industrial chemicals.

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CNO is a natural oil and superior to liquid paraffins of petroleum origin which are derived from lubricating oil fractions by acid treatment. No doubt, aromatics are removed, but naphthalenes remain in the paraffin oil. Liquid paraffins do not become rancid and hence find application in cosmetic products.

Bureau of Indian Standards has published specifications for various grades of liquid paraffin for use in cosmetics. Another reason for use of liquid paraffin in India was due to its low price compared to vegetable oils.

Hair Oils

Hair oils in India are permitted to be made with (i) pure vegetable oils (ii) pure liquid paraffin and (iii) mixture of the two. Liquid paraffin reduces the sticky nature of vegetable oils.

Natural CNO is an excellent base for hair oil and for consumer appeal, it is perfumed. Some people are allergic to perfume and to them, pure natural CNO is the best hair oil of choice. Those who do not like the natural fragrance of CNO in hair oil, may choose the deodorized variety. In fact, this base is used for hair oil containing perfume.

Skin Oils

Pure CNO is used in India since

time immemorial as a body oil and for massaging purposes. It has been used even for babies and infants as a massage oil. It is therefore recommended that natural CNO could safely be used as a baby oil and the thin film left on the infant's body will act as a skin protectant.

However, if one needs an odourless oil, one might prefer the deodorised grade which is a good substitute for the expensive 'Baby oil' available in the market which is mostly based on liquid paraffins of petroleum origin.

The only drawback of CNO is its low solidification point, around 20°C, which prevents its flow out of the bottle in winter. Hence, liquid paraffin is substituted for CNO in hair and body oils particularly in cold weather countries.

Liquid paraffin is not a natural product and if not properly manufactured and tested may give rise to dermatological problems. It is now expensive too. Thus, natural CNO is a superior baby and hair oil particularly for Indian conditions. There is scope to separate CNO into fractions to develop a low freezing product.

Natural CNO when stored in brown glass bottles, at ambient temperatures around 27°C, remains stable for about two years. Raw CNO can also be stored well in metal containers for one year without any change.

Toiletries

Natural CNO can be converted to liquid soap which is a natural shampoo, while other shampoos in

the market are based on a mixture of synthetic surface active agents. CNO is one of the important raw materials for toilet soap with good lathering property.

In the cosmetic and toiletry industry world over, there is a preference to adopt formulations with natural, renewable, biodegradable raw materials. Here, vegetable oils and fats, and in particular natural CNO, will play an important role as a substitute for synthetic raw materials.

In the beginning of the 21st century, there will be a trend to use CNO and its derivatives in larger quantities. It is likely that even skin creams will be in the market with natural flavoured CNO without the addition of any other fragrance.

Courtesy : KEEMAT

Health Benefits of Coconut Oil

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.

The human body converts lauric acid into monolaurin which is claimed to help in dealing with viruses and bacteria causing diseases such as herpes, influenza, cytomegalovirus, and even HIV. It helps in fighting harmful bacteria such as listeria monocytogenes and heliobacter pylori, and harmful protozoa such as giardia lamblia. As a result of these various health benefits of coconut oil, it has been extensively used in Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicinal system.

Coconut oil is often preferred by athletes and body builders and by those who are dieting. The reason behind this being that coconut oil contains lesser calories than other oils, its fat content is easily converted into energy and it does not lead to accumulation of fat in the heart and arteries. Coconut oil helps in boosting energy and endurance and enhances the performance of athletes

Source: www.organicfacts.net