



Coconut Oil Benefits for Brain, Heart, Joints and more

Dr. Josh Axe

To date, there are over 1,500 studies proving coconut oil to be one of the healthiest foods on the planet. Coconut oil benefits and uses go beyond what most people realize, as coconut oil — made copra or dried coconut flesh — is a true superfood.

Research has finally uncovered the secrets to this amazing superfood: namely healthy fats called medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs). These unique fats include: Caprylic acid, Lauric acid and Capric acid

Around 62 percent of the oils in coconut are made up of these three healthy fatty acids and 91 percent of the fat in coconut oil is healthy saturated fat. This fat composition makes it one of the most beneficial fats on the planet, as the USDA nutrient database shows.

Most of the fats we consume take longer time to digest, but MCFAs found in coconut oil provide the perfect source of energy because they only have to go through a three-step process to be turned into fuel vs. other fats that have to go through a 26-step process!

Unlike long-chain fatty acids found in plant-based oils, MCFAs are easier to digest, not readily stored as fat, antimicrobial and antifungal, smaller in size, allowing easier cell permeability for immediate energy and processed by the liver, which means that they're immediately converted to energy instead of being stored as fat. All of this shows why this oil made from coconut copra makes for a true superfood, and it's why coconut oil benefits are so plentiful and amazing.



Proven Coconut Oil Benefits

According to medical research and the USDA nutrient database, coconut oil benefits the body in the following ways:

► *Proven Alzheimer's Disease Natural Treatment*

The digestion of MCFAs by the liver creates ketones that are readily accessible by the brain for energy. Ketones supply energy to the brain without the need of insulin to process glucose into energy.

Recent research has shown that the brain actually creates its own insulin to process glucose and power brain cells. As the brain of an Alzheimer's patient loses the ability to create its own insulin, the ketones from coconut oil could create an alternate source of energy to help repair brain function.

► *Prevents Heart Disease and High Blood Pressure*

Coconut oil is high in natural saturated fats. Saturated fats not only increase the healthy cholesterol (known as HDL cholesterol) in human body, but also help convert the LDL "bad" cholesterol

into good cholesterols. By increasing the HDL in the body, it helps promote heart health and lower the risk of heart disease. Coconut oil benefits the heart by lowering high triglycerides.

► **Treats UTI and Kidney Infection and Protects the Liver**

Coconut oil has been known to clear up and heal urinary tract infection (UTI) and kidney infections. The MCFAs in the oil work as a natural antibiotic by disrupting the lipid coating on bacteria and killing them. Research also shows that coconut oil directly protects the liver from damage. Coconut water also helps hydrate and support the healing process. Doctors have even injected coconut water to clear up kidney stones. Coconut is a powerful superfood, which is evident given all these tremendous coconut oil benefits.

► **Reduces Inflammation and Arthritis**

In a study in India, the high levels of antioxidants present in virgin coconut oil (VCO) reduced inflammation and treated arthritis more effectively than leading medications. In another recent study, coconut oil that was harvested with only medium heat was found to suppress inflammatory cells. It worked as both an analgesic and anti-inflammatory.

► **Cancer Prevention and Treatment**



Coconut oil has two qualities that help it fight cancer: one, because of the ketones produced in its digestion. Tumor cells are not able to access the energy in ketones and are glucose-dependent. It's believed that a ketogenic diet could be a possible component of helping cancer patients recover. Two, as the MCFAs digest the lipid walls of bacteria, they also can kill the helicobacter pylori bacteria that has been known to increase the risk of stomach cancer. Even in studies where cancer is chemically induced, the introduction of coconut oil prevents cancer from developing.

► **Immune System Boost (Antibacterial, Antifungal and Antiviral)**

Coconut oil contains lauric acid (monolaurin), which is known to reduce candida, fight bacteria and create a hostile environment for viruses. Many diseases today are caused by the overgrowth of bad bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites in the body. You can replace grains and sugar in your diet with coconut oil as your natural fuel source when you're sick. Sugar feeds the growth of bad bacteria. Instead, take one tablespoon of coconut oil three times daily when sick, and consume plenty of vegetables and bone broth as well.

► **Improves Memory and Brain Function**

In a 2004 study published in the Journal of Neurobiology of Aging, researchers found that the MCFAs in coconut oil improved the memory problems in their older subjects.

Across all the patients there was a marked improvement in their recall ability after taking this fatty acid. As the MCFAs are absorbed easily in the body and can be accessed in the brain without the use of insulin. Thus, they are able to fuel brain cells more efficiently.

► **Improves Energy and Endurance**

Coconut oil is easy to digest and also produces a longer sustained energy and increases metabolism. When taking a quality unrefined coconut oil, you can get the most coconut oil benefits as its MCFAs are sent directly to the liver to be converted into energy. Today, many triathletes use coconut oil as their source of fuel during training and races for long-distance events. You can make a homemade energy fuel by mixing coconut oil, raw honey and chia seeds together. Simply put together one tablespoon of each and consume 30 minutes prior to exercise.

► **Improves Digestion and Reduces Stomach Ulcers and Ulcerative Colitis**

Coconut also improves digestion as it helps the body 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 twice as effective, as they are readily available to be digested and used by the body.

Coconut oil can 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. All this together means coconut oil benefits digestive

health and helps treat or prevent stomach ulcers and ulcerative colitis.

► *Reduces Symptoms of Gallbladder Disease and Pancreatitis*

The MCFAs of coconut oil do not need the pancreatic enzymes to be broken down, so taking coconut oil eases the strain on the pancreas. Additionally, this superfood is so easy to digest that it has been known to improve the symptoms of gallbladder disease as well. Replace other long-chain fats with coconut oil to improve gallbladder and total body health.

► *Improves Skin Issues (Burns, Eczema, Dandruff, Dermatitis and Psoriasis)*

Coconut oil is wonderful as a face cleanser, moisturizer and sun screen, but also it can treat many skin disorders. The fatty acids (caprylic and lauric) in coconut oil reduce inflammation internally and externally and moisturize, making them a great solution for all types of skin conditions. It protects the skin and has many antioxidants that make it ideal for healing the skin. In addition, the antimicrobial properties balance out the candida or fungal sources that can cause many skin conditions. There's so much unrefined coconut oil can do for skin.



► *Prevents Gum Disease and Tooth Decay*

Oil pulling with coconut oil has been used for centuries as a way to cleanse the mouth of bacteria and help heal periodontal disease. Coconut oil is one of the most effective oils for oil pulling due to its high concentration of antibacterial MCFAs. By swishing the oil in your mouth, the oil denatures the bacteria and sticks to it. Removing oral bacteria greatly reduces your risk of periodontal disease. If you want to heal your gums and repair your teeth, I recommend coconut oil pulling three times a week for 20 minutes a day.

► *Prevents Osteoporosis*

Oxidative stress and free radicals are the two biggest culprits of osteoporosis. Since coconut oil has such high levels of antioxidants, which help fight free radicals, it is a leading natural treatment for osteoporosis. Another of the amazing coconut oil benefits is that it increases calcium absorption in the gut. Research on osteoporosis has found that coconut oil not only increases bone volume and structure in subjects, but also decreased bone loss due to osteoporosis.

► *Improves Type II Diabetes*

When cells refuse to respond to insulin and no longer take in glucose for energy, then they're considered insulin-resistant. The pancreas then pumps out more insulin to compensate and creates an overproduction cycle. Insulin resistance is the precursor to type II diabetes. The MCFAs in coconut oil help balance the insulin reactions in the cells and promote healthy digestive process. They take off the strain on the pancreas and give the body a consistent energy source that is not dependent on glucose reactions, which can prevent insulin resistance and type II diabetes.

► *Coconut Oil for Weight loss*

Because of the energy-creating abilities of coconut oil and the fact it's a no-carb oil, it is no wonder that it is beneficial in losing weight. It helps burn fat and calories, decrease appetite, and in studies it was especially helpful in losing belly fat. Coconut's ability to help you shed fat has been well-established. A 1985 study published in the Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health proved that a single injection of capric acid resulted in "initially rapid, then gradual decrease in food consumption and a parallel loss of body weight" in male rats.

It might seem counterintuitive to assume that eating coconut oil (a fat) will contribute to fat loss, but it is actually quite logical. The key to understanding this phenomenon lays in the multidimensional ability of the MCFAs to control a variety of physiological processes.

For example, in the 1985 study mentioned above, it was discovered that capric acid shows significant improvements in thyroid function, helps lower resting heart rate and assists your body in burning fat for energy. More recently, the Obesity Research Journal published a study from Boston University Medical School that gives us a clue why MCFAs have fat-burning ability.

Testing the effects that MFCAs have on fat breakdown, adipose (fatty) cells in rats were pretreated with caprylic acid. They observed that fat breakdown occurred at such a significant level that it literally mimicked the characteristics of fasting. Fasting, in this sense, is not to be regarded as negative, but positive in that the body uses its energy reserves most effectively and speeds up the breakdown of needless fat reserves. In the words of the researchers who conducted this study, "Such changes could contribute, in part, to weight loss in animals and humans associated with dietary medium-chain fatty acids."

► **Building Muscle and Losing Body Fat**

MCFAs aren't just good for burning fat; they are also great for building muscle. The MCFAs found in coconut are also used in popular muscle-building products like Muscle Milk™. The vast majority of heavily produced supplements, however, use processed forms of MCFAs. By eating actual coconuts instead, you get the "real deal." I recommend adding three tablespoons of coconut oil to a muscle-building shake daily.



► **Coconut Oil Benefits for Hair Care**

If you have dandruff or dry hair, coconut oil has the perfect fatty acids to help improve these conditions. In fact, there is so much coconut oil can do for hair. You can make homemade coconut lavender shampoo to improve your hair and use straight coconut oil as an all-natural hair conditioner. To get rid of dandruff and thicken hair, massage one tablespoon of coconut oil mixed with 10 drops of rosemary essential oil into your scalp for three minutes. Then shower 30 minutes later.

► **Candida and Yeast Infections**

A study published in the journal Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy found the capric acid and lauric acid in coconut oil made for an effective natural treatment for candida albicans and yeast infections. To effectively kill candida and treat yeast infections,

remove processed sugar and refined grains from your diet and consume plenty of healthy fats. Take one tablespoon of coconut oil three times daily as a supplement.

► **Coconut Oil for Anti-Aging**



According to research published in the medical journal Food and Function, coconut oil improves antioxidant levels and can slow aging. Coconut oil works by reducing

stress on the liver and lowering oxidative stress.

Also, researchers found that coconut oil may support detoxification because of how it works with the liver. To naturally slow aging, take one tablespoon of coconut oil with antioxidant-rich berries for breakfast. You can also apply it directly to skin for additional benefits and smoothing.

► **Coconut Oil for Hormone Balance**

Using coconut oil benefits your hormones as well! Coconut oil may help naturally balance hormones because it's a great source of saturated fat, including lauric acid. Studies have found that coconut oil may be an excellent fat to consume during menopause and also may have positives effects on estrogen levels.

In order to naturally balance hormones, reduce sugar and grain consumption and load up on healthy fats from coconut, avocado, flax seeds and ghee. You can also consume other coconut forms, such as coconut butter or coconut water.

The benefits of coconut oil are immense. Coconut oil helps the body in so many ways. Remember to use coconut oil in place of other cooking oils whenever you can since it has an extremely healthy fat composition, and always opt for the pure coconut oil to get the best coconut oil benefits.

Source: *Dr.Axe.com*:

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