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Losing Fat and Gaining Health with Coconut

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Delicious, smooth and creamy, coconuts are often associated with sinful cocktails or island holidays. Few of us would consider eating coconuts to be a dedicated health choice. Rather, we're more likely to try and resist indulgence, because coconut flesh and milk are so fatty.

For decades the relationship between coconut fat and health has been the subject of much debate and misinformation ¹. Coconut is actually not a nut, but a fruit. It has received bad publicity due to a high **saturated fat** content, which is presumed to raise **cholesterol** levels.

92% of coconut is saturated fat. Little wonder we want to steer clear! However, we've been misled. Because included in this is the highest source (62%) of **medium-chain triglycerides** (MCTs), of any naturally occurring vegan source ². MCTs raise the body's **metabolism** because they don't under-go the degradation and **re-esterification** processes of other saturated fats. Thus, they are therefore directly used in the body to produce energy ³.

Perhaps we should take note of South Pacific islander populations who call coconut The Tree of Life. Like many other warm climate cultures, 60% of their **caloric** intake comes from the saturated fat of coconut oil. They are lean and very healthy people who are relatively free from the modern diseases of western cultures, including obesity ⁴.

Coconut derived MCTs are argued to increase fat-burning and **thermogenic** effects by 50%. This may be due to coconut oil's absorbability which reduces strain on the pancreas and digestive system. As a plant-supplied saturated **lipid**, MCTs have a lower-melting point than animal derived saturated fats, they are smaller in molecular size and display greater solubility in biological fluids than long chain fatty acids (such as those found in butter). This gives coconut the cutting edge above all other fats ⁵.

Coconut promotes weight loss because it has fewer calories than any other oil or fat. It is also a must-have food for diabetics, helping regulate blood sugar minimising **insulin** spikes.

In contrast to what we've been told, saturated fats aren't all bad. They:

- constitute 50% of cell membranes, giving cells firmness and integrity;
- play a vital role in bone health (at least 50% of our dietary fats need to be saturated for **Calcium** to be effectively incorporated into the skeletal structure ⁶;
- Protect the liver from the toxic effects of alcohol and certain drugs ⁷;
- Are the preferred foods for the heart, which is why the fat around the heart muscle is highly saturated ⁸.

In respect to cholesterol, research has demonstrated the potential benefits of virgin coconut oil in preventing **LDL oxidation** due to its beneficial and active **polyphenol** components ⁹. Another factor of coconut's exceptional virtues is it's richness in



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lauric acid which is an immune building component, sourced nowhere else other than from mother's breast milk. Lauric acid forms a **monoglyceride** called monolaurin which has shown ability to destroy several bacteria and viruses including HIV, herpes simplex, measles, influenza ¹⁰ and yeast infections such as Candida ¹¹.

In his book "Facts and Fallacies about Coconut Oil" P.K. Thapman cites research revealing that coconut oil consumption is unrelated to coronary heart disease mortality and morbidity, which is contrary to what we've been taught. In fact, instances of longer life expectancy are clearly shown in predominantly coconut consuming areas, than in other places within the same country that ate less coconut ¹².

It could certainly pay to start increasing our coconut consumption, or at least stop avoiding it in fear of 'bad' fats.

For a taste of paradise this winter, why not mix coconut milk with your favourite **Aussie Bodies protein powder**, to enhance your energy levels, improve immunity, and possibly live a long and fruitful life?

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