

# The Health Benefits of Virgin Coconut Oil

## *About the Authors*

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Dr Conrado Dayrit Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology University of the Philippines and Past President of the National Academy of Science and Technology. Dr Dayrit's clinical study on coconut oil was the first which led to the breakthrough discovery that medium-chain fatty acids (lauric and capric) were effective in killing HIV in lab cultures.

## *Highlights of the Reference Materials*

- Why Coconut Oil is Different
- Lauric Acid-Major ingredient from mother's milk is found in Coconut Oil
- Metabolism of MCFA
- Nature's Marvelous Germ Fighter
- Coconut Oil as Medicine
- Coconut Oil and Weight Problems
- Health Benefits of Coconut oil – Summary
- How to make Virgin Coconut Oil
- Additional References

<b>COMPOSITION OF DIETARY FATS</b>			
<b>Fat</b>	<b>Saturated</b>	<b>Mono</b>	<b>Poly</b>
Canola Oil	6	62	32
Safflower Oil	10	13	77
Sunflower Oil	11	20	69
Soybean Oil	13	25	62
Olive Oil	14	77	9
Chicken Fat	31	47	22
Lard	41	47	12
Beef Fat	52	44	4
Palm Oil	51	39	10
Butter	66	30	4
Coconut Oil	92	6	2

Called “*monounsaturated*” because it is predominantly monounsaturated, but like all vegetable oils, it also contains some polyunsaturated and saturated fat as well.

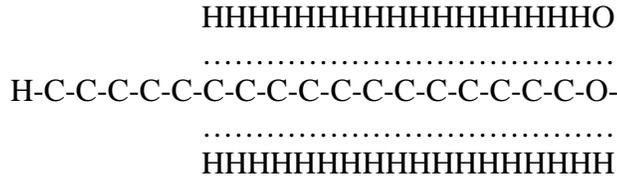
Animal fats are generally the highest in saturated fat. Vegetable oils contain saturated fat as well as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat. Most vegetable oils are high in saturated fat. Coconut oil contains as much as 92 percent saturated fat-more than any other oil including beef fat and lard.

### ***SATURATION AND SIZE***

We hear the terms saturated, monosaturated, and polyunsaturated all the time, but what do they mean? What is saturated fat saturated with? All fatty acids consist primarily of a chain of carbon atoms with varying number of hydrogen atoms attached to them. A molecule that has two hydrogen atoms attached to each carbon is said to “saturated” with hydrogen because it is holding all the hydrogen atoms it possibly can. This type of fatty acid is called a saturated fat. A fatty acid that is missing a pair of hydrogen atoms on one of its carbons is called a monounsaturated fat. If more than two hydrogen atoms are missing, it’s called a polyunsaturated fat. Wherever a pair of hydrogen atoms is missing, the adjoining carbon atoms must form a double bond(see examples on the following page). This is important because this double bond produces a weak link in the carbon chain which, as we will see in the next chapter, can have a dramatic influence on health.

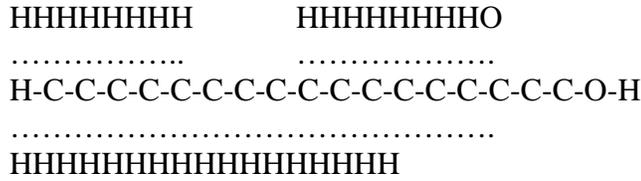
The concept of saturation can be described by using an analogy with a school bus full of kids. The bus could represent the carbon chain and the students the hydrogen atoms. Each seat on the bus can hold two students just as each carbon can hold two hydrogen atoms. A bus filled to capacity so there are no empty seats would be analogous to a saturated fat. No more

***Saturated Fatty Acid***



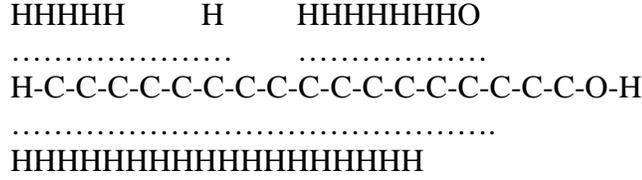
Saturated fats are loaded, or saturated, with all the hydrogen(H) atoms they can carry. The example shown above is stearic acids an 18-carbon saturated fat commonly found in beef fat.

***Monounsaturated Fatty Acid***



If one pair of hydrogen's were to be removed from the saturated fat, the carbon atoms would form double bond's with one another in order to satisfy their bonding requirements. The result would be unsaturated fat. In this case it would form a monounsaturated fatty acid. The example shown is oleic acid, an 18-chain monounsaturated fatty acid which is found predominantly in olive oil.

***Polyunsaturated Fatty Acid***



If two or more pairs of hydrogen atoms are missing and more than one double carbon bond is present, it is referred to as a polyunsaturated oil. The example illustrated is linoleic acid an 18-chain polyunsaturated acid. This is the most common fat in vegetable oils.

<b>FATTY ACIDS</b>			
Fatty Acid	No of Carbons	No of Double Bonds	Common Source
<b>SATURATED FATTY ACIDS</b>			
Acetic	2	0	Vinegar
Butyric	4	0	Butterfat
Caproic	6	0	Butterfat
Caprylic	8	0	Coconut Oil
Capric	10	0	Palm Oil
Lauric	12	0	Coconut Oil
Myristic	14	0	Nutmeg oil, butterfat
Palmitic	16	0	Animal & vegetable oil
Stearic	18	0	Animal & vegetable oil
Arachidic	20	0	Peanut oil
<b>MONOUNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS</b>			
Palmitoleic	16	1	Butterfat
Oleic	18	1	Olive Oil
Erucic	22	1	Rapeseed Oil (Canola)
<b>POLYUNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS</b>			
Linoleic	18	2	Vegetable Oil
Alpha-linolenic	18	3	Linseed Oil
Arachidonic	20	4	Lecithin
Eicosapentaenoic	20	5	Fish Oil
Docosahexaenoic	22	6	Fish Oil
* Rapeseed oil contains as much as 55% erucic acid – a very toxic fatty acid. Through the process of genetic engineering the erucic acid content has been reduced to less than 1%. To distinguish this genetically altered oil from the original it is given the name canola oil. This is the canola in our foods.			

*Fatty acids commonly found in foods*

The fats found in animal tissue, as well as our own bodies, are mainly the triglycerides of stearic, palmitic, and oleic acids. Oleic acid is a monounsaturated fat. Stearic and palmitic acids are saturated fats.

The saturated fat found in food consists of a mixture of the different types. Milk for example, contains palmitic, myristic, stearic, lauric, butyric.

As far back as 1966 Dr. Jon J. Kabara, a professor of pharmacology and researcher at Michigan State University, reported on the antimicrobial activity of lauric acid, because of concerns about viral contamination in foods, early research focused on the antiviral effects of lauric acid. It was soon discovered that lauric acid also exhibited antibacterial and antifungal effects as well. In fact, all the MCFA seem to share this characteristic.

Most bacteria and viruses are encased in a coat of lipids (fats). The fatty acids that make up this outer membrane or skin hold together the organism's DNA and other cellular materials. But unlike our skin, which is relatively tough, the membrane of these microorganisms is nearly fluid. The fatty acids in the membrane are loosely attached,

giving the membrane remarkable degree of mobility and flexibility. This unique property allows these organisms to move, bend, and squeeze through the tiniest openings.

Lipid-coated viruses and bacteria are easily killed by MCFA, which primarily destroy these organisms by disrupting their lipid membranes. Medium-chain fatty acids, being similar to those in the microorganism’s membrane, MCFA are much smaller and, therefore, weaken the already nearly fluid membrane to such a degree that it disintegrates. The membrane literally splits open, spilling its insides and killing the organism. Our white blood cells quickly clean up and dispose of the cellular debris. MCFA kill invading organisms without causing any known harm to human tissues.

Our bodies have many ways of protecting us from microorganisms that can cause us harm. The strong acid excreted in our stomachs, for example, kills most organisms that we may eat with our foods. In our bloodstream, microorganisms are attached and killed by our white blood cells. Our first line of defence against any harmful organism, however, is our skin. In order to inflict harm, microorganisms must first penetrate the skin’s protective barrier. While the skin is permeable to some degree, it is also equipped with chemical weapons to help it ward off attack. One of these weapons is the oil secreted by our sebaceous(oil)glands. Sebaceous glands are found near the root of every hair. This oil is secreted along the hair shaft to lubricate the hair and skin. Some have described this oil as “nature’s skin cream” because it prevents drying and cracking of the skin it also has another very important function. It contains medium-chain fatty acids to fight invading microorganisms. A thin layer of oil on the skin helps protect us from the multitude of harmful germs our skin comes into contact with each day.

The antimicrobial power of MCFA are utilized naturally by our own bodies. They are found in mother’s milk to protect and nourish her babies;

<b>LIPID COATED MICROORGANISMS KILLED BY LAURIC ACID</b>
Below are some of the pathogenic organisms reported to be inactivated by lauric acid
<b><i>Lipid Coated Viruses</i></b>
Visna virus Cytomegalovirus Epstein-barr virus Influenza virus Leukemia virus Pneumono virus Hepatitis C virus
<b><i>Lipid Coated Bacteria</i></b>
Listeria monocytogenes Helicobacter pylori Hemophilus influenzae Staphylococcus aureus Streptococcus agalactiae Groups A, B, F, & G streptococci Gram-positive organisms Gram-negative organisms (if pretreated with chelator)

*Numerous laboratory studies have shown that lauric acid effectively kills many disease-causing microorganisms.*

They are also utilized on our skin to shield us from infectious intruders. They are non-toxic to us and create no toxic by-products. They are completely safe and natural. Lipid researcher Jon J Kabara, Ph D., speaking of the safety of using fatty acids for medicinal purposes says, “Fatty acids and derivatives tend to be the least toxic chemicals known to man. Not only are these agents nontoxic to man but are actual foods and in the case of unsaturated fatty acids are essential to growth, development, and health.

### ***LAURIC ACID***

Technical speaking, coconut oil as it is found in fresh coconuts has little, if any, antimicrobial properties. Coconuts can be attacked by fungi and bacteria like any other fruit or nut. I know this sounds contrary to what I’ve stated above, but the beauty of this is that when we eat oil, our bodies convert it into a form that is deadly to troublesome microbes, yet remains harmless to us.

All dietary oils, including coconut, are composed of triglycerides. Triglycerides are nothing more than three fatty acids hooked together by a glycerol molecule. When oil is eaten the triglycerides break apart into diglycerides (two fatty acids joined by a glycerol), monoglycerides (a single fatty acid attached to a glycerol), and free fatty acids. It is the monoglycerides and free fatty acids that have the antimicrobial properties. The most active are lauric acid and capric acid and their monoglycerides-monolaurin and monocaprin.

In regards to their antimicrobial properties, the monoglycerides and free fatty acids are active and the diglycerides and triglycerides are inactive. The antimicrobial properties of coconut oil (which consists of triglycerides). Therefore, become active only when ingested or otherwise converted into free fatty acids or monoglycerides.

The medium-chain fatty acids that appears to have greatest overall antimicrobial effect is lauric acid (and monolaurin). This is the largest of the MCFA consisting of a string of 12 carbon atoms.

Coconut and palm kernel oils are by far richest natural sources of this super nutrient, comprising nearly 50 percent of their fat content. Milk fat and butter are a distant second consisting of about 3 percent. These are the only food sources we have that contain significant amounts of lauric acid. Unlike the tropical oils, all vegetable oils are completely deficient in this and other MCFA.

Neisseria	meningitis, gonorrhea, pelvic inflammatory Diseases
Chlamydia	genital infections, lympho granuloma venereum,conjunctivitis, parrot fever pneumonia, periodontitis
Helicobacter pyloris	stomach ulcers
Gram positive organisms	anthrax, gastroenteritis, botulism, tetanus

Antibiotic properties that have been used for generations with some degree of success. One of these is coconut oil.

The fatty acids found in coconut are powerful antibiotics. They are known to kill bacteria which can cause throat and sinus infections, pneumonia, ear infections, stomach ulcers, venereal diseases, and dental cavities, to name just a few. The table above lists some of the bacteria MCFA are effective against and the common diseases these organisms cause.

The standard treatment for all these bacteria infections is to use antibiotics, and this may be necessary in life-threatening situations. It is conceivable that instead of taking a drug for every single infection, we may simply eat foods that will kill these organisms. Onions, garlic, and Echinacea are credible plants that are commonly used for this purpose already. Coconut living in their digestive tract. Normally, competition from friendly bacteria and the cleansing action of our immune system keep candida numbers low and prevent them from causing any diverse health problems. But when the immune system is compromised or friendly bacteria in our gut are killed by taking antibiotics, a candida infection can quickly flare up. A single course of antibiotics can lead to a raging candida infection. Approximately 75 percent of women experience vaginal yeast infections at one time or another.

Vaginal yeast infections are typically treated as if they were only localized in one are of the body. Many people, however, have systemic infections in which candida grows out of control overrunning the digestive tract and affecting the entire body, including the reproductive system. Systemic yeast infections call candidiasis (or yeast syndrome) affect the entire body and can afflict men as well as women. Symptoms are numerous and varied (see table below) and even doctors have difficult identifying the problem.

Because it is not easy to identify, hundreds of thousands of women and men are plagued with candidiasis without even realizing it. Vaginal yeast infection or oral yeast infections (thrush) can be identified by the white discharge they produce. Recurring vaginal yeast infections are one of the signs of a systemic infection. But you can have candidiasis without an active vaginal yeast infection. Anyone who has taken antibiotics, birth control pills, steroids, or immunosuppressive drugs is at high risk of having a systemic yeast infection, even if no noticeable symptoms are evident.

***PROBLEMS COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH SYSTEMIC CANDIDA INFECTIONS***

General: fatigue, headache, digestive problems, joint pains, depression, memory loss, irritability, allergies

Women: persistent vaginitis, menstrual irregularities, recurrent bladder problems

Men: persistent or recurrent jock itch of athlete's foot, prostatitis impotence

Children: ear infections, hyperactive, behavior and learning problems

Source: Crook, W, 1985, *The Yeast Connection*

Typical symptoms also include fatigue, depression, allergy symptoms, and recurring fungal skin infections (athlete's foot, jock itch, ringworm, etc).

Skin fungus can afflict any part of the body from the head to the toed. Dry flaky skin that persists despite the use of hand lotion and skin creams could very well be a fungal infection. Often what people call psoriasis is really a fungal infection. Dandruff is caused, in part, by skin fungus. Preadolescent children are the primary victims of scalp ringworm(tinea capitis), a skin fungus similar to athlete's foot. Not until puberty do glands secrete oil containing medium-chain fatty acids that help protect the scalp from skin fungus (see Chapter 11 for more information on skin health).

One of the most potent non-drug or natural yeast-fighting substances is caprylic acid, a medium-chain fatty acid derived from coconut oil. Caprylic acid in capsule form is commonly sold as a dietary supplement in health food stores. It is very effective against candida and other forms of fungi. It is even effective mixed with a little coconut oil or vitamin E oil as a topical application for fungal skin infections. I've seen fungal infections that have lasted for months clear up in a matter of days using caprylic acid and a little coconut oil. It works just as effectively inside the body, killing fungi without the least bit of harm. Polynesian women who eat their traditional coconut-based diet rarely if ever get yeast infections. Eating coconut oil on a regular basis, as the Polynesians do, would help to keep candida and other harmful microorganisms at bay.

The efficiency of caprylic acid is reportedly so favorable that many supplement manufacturers put it in their products used to fight systemic and vaginal yeast infections. John P Trowbrodge, MD, President of the American college of Advancement of Medicine, and author of the book *The Yeast Syndrome*, highly recommends caprylic acid as an aid to fight systemic candida infections.

William Crook, MD., the author of *The Yeast Connection* and recognized authority on yeast infections, also recommends it. He reports that many physicians have used it successfully and that it works especially well for those patients who have adverse reactions to antifungal drugs. It is reported that caprylic acid is just as effective as nystatin, the most popular antifungal prescription drug, but without the side effects.

The only effective cure for candidiasis has been dietary changes and medications. Caprylic acid is a natural yeast fighter that has been used very successfully in place of the drugs. Caprylic acid is often sold in combination with anti-fungal herbs in dietary supplements designed to help those with yeast infections. Caprylic (Nature's way), Capricin (Professional Specialties), Mycostat (P&D Nutrition), and Caprystatin (Ecological Formulas) are the names of some of the anti-candida supplements available.

### ***AIDS PREVENTION AND TREATMENT***

After two decades of research, the AIDS epidemic is still going strong. Drugs have been developed to help slow down the progress of the disease but like other viruses, there is yet no cure.

One of the most exciting and active areas of research with MCFA is in the treatment of those infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV, like many other microorganisms, has a lipid membrane which is vulnerable to MCFA.

In the 1980s researchers discovered that the medium-chain fatty acids lauric and capric acids were effective in killing HIV in lab cultures. This opened the door to a possible treatment for HIV/AIDS that was far safer than the drugs currently being used.

One of the problems with antiviral drugs used to fight HIV is that they have undesirable side effects including muscle wasting, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, bone marrow suppression, ulcerations, hemorrhaging, skin rash, anemia, fatigue, and altered mental function. Another problem is that the AIDS virus can grow resistant to the drugs, often becoming invulnerable to them. The specific combination of viral resistance varies from patient to patient. To fight these resistant strains of super viruses doctors use a hit-and-miss approach by brewing potent AIDS drug cocktails. The more drugs used, the greater the risk of undesirable side effects.

Unlike the standard drugs used to treat HIV which attack the virus's genetic material, medium-chain fatty acids simply break the virus apart. The MCFA are much like the other fatty acids that make up the virus's lipid membrane and are absorbed by the virus, which weakens the membrane until it breaks apart, killing the virus. It is unlikely that the virus can develop an immunity to this mechanism, so MCFA can attack and kill any of the strains of HIV, even the genetically drug-resistant superviruses.

Over the years many HIV infected individuals have reported a decrease in their viral load (the number of viruses in the blood) and an improvement in overall health after eating coconut or drinking milk. Some have reported lowering their viral loads to non-detectable levels after eating coconut for only a few weeks.

The first clinical study on the effectiveness of coconut oil to treat HIV patients was reported by Conrado Dayrit, M.D., emeritus professor of pharmacology, University of the Philippines and former President of the National Academy of Science and Technology, Philippines. In this study 14 patients ages 22 to 38 with HIV were separated into three groups. None of the patients have ever received any anti-HIV treatment. The treatment they were testing compared monolaurin (the monoglyceride of lauric acid found in coconut oil (see page 62) and pure coconut oil. One group (four patients) was given 22

grams of monolaurin a day. The second group (five patients) was given 7.2 grams of monolaurin. The third group (five patients) was given 3 1/2 tablespoons of coconut oil. The amount of coconut oil in the third group contained about the same quantity of lauric acid as supplied by the monolaurin in the first group. After three months of treatment the viral load had decreased in seven of the patients. After six months when the study was completed nine out of the 14 patients had a decreased viral count (two in the first group, four in the second, and three in the third). Eleven of the patients had regained weight and appeared to be improving. This study confirmed the anecdotal reports that coconut oil has anti-HIV effects and has provided solid clinical evidence that both monolaurin and coconut oil are effective in fighting HIV. Additional research is currently underway to further study the use of monolaurin and coconut oil to treat HIV/AIDS.

Unfortunately, the ready availability and low cost of coconut oil and its derivative fatty is one reason why research into its use as a treatment for AIDS and other viral illnesses has been slow. There is little monetary incentive for pharmaceutical companies to fund research of a natural, readily available substance that they cannot protect with a patent and charge exorbitant prices for. Currently the cost standard medications for one person to control the virus can reach over \$15,000 a year. If all the hundreds of thousand of people who are infected by HIV spend anywhere near this amount you can easily see the enormous amount of money the pharmaceutical companies pull in. It is no wonder they are reluctant to support a treatment that threatens to end this flood of cash.

HIV-infected individuals often suffer from nutritional deficiencies and recurrent infections. Resistance to infectious illness decreases as the disease progresses. Opportunistic microorganisms such as cytomegalovirus, candida, cryptosporidium, and others quickly take root. In time the body is devastated so greatly by infection that survival is impossible. The fatty acids in coconut oil not only offer the possibility of reducing HIV load, but kill other harmful organisms as well. Combined with the fact that lauric acid and other MCFAs improve digestion and energy production, the result is better overall health.

Current research suggests that individuals infected with HIV progress more rapidly to AIDS when they have a higher viral load. Reducing the viral load to undetectable levels greatly increases the patient's chances of avoiding the disease and reduces the chance of infecting others.

A recent study by researchers from Johns Hopkins University showed that the number of individual viruses in the person determines the degree to which the virus can be passed on to others. They found that someone with 200,000 virus copies (individual viruses per mm of blood) is 2.5 times more likely to spread HIV than is someone with only 2,000 copies. The researchers found no transmission of the virus at all by infected people who carried less than 1,500 copies of the virus.

Currently some researchers recommended that HIV-infected individuals consume the equivalent of 24-28 grams of lauric acid a day in order to significantly reduce their viral load. This would amount to about 3 1/2 tablespoons (50 grams) of coconut oil.

What does all this mean to you and me? A lot. While it is not yet known if lauric acid may one day be a cure for AIDS, it has been proved to reduce the HIV load in those

individuals who are infected by the virus, thus allowing them to live more normal lives and greatly reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to others. It may just as well be able to protect and possibly prevent infection in the first place if a person has sufficient lauric acid in his or her daily diet and exposure to HIV is low.

Currently the AIDS epidemic has spread worldwide. Millions of people are affected by HIV. The numbers who become infected are increasing daily. As yet there has not been effective means to stop this plague. With coconut oil and lauric acid now there is hope. Many people fear picking up the virus, even those who are not involved in high risk activities. The simple act of using coconut oil in your ordinary food preparation may provide you with a substantial degree of protection not only against HIV but against measles, herpes, flu, as well as dozens of other of disease-causing viruses.

### ***CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME***

Coconut oil may be one of the best solutions to chronic fatigue syndrome currently available. Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), once considered to be an imaginary ailment, is now recognized as a bona fide illness. While its cause is still pretty much a mystery, it has become a problem of growing concern. It is estimated that some three million Americans and 90 million people worldwide are affected by it.

CFS is characterized by a relatively sudden onset of extreme fatigue, often following an infectious illness. Symptoms may include any of the following: muscle weakness, headache, memory loss, mental confusion, recurring infections, low-grade fever, swollen lymph glands, severe exhaustion following moderate physical activity, depression, anxiety attacks, dizziness, rashes, allergies, and autoimmune reactions. Symptoms that persist for six months or more are a strong indications of CFS.

Coconut oil provides a quick source of energy and stimulates metabolism. This boost in energy not only lifts the spirit but promotes faster healing. The higher the body's metabolism the more efficient the immune system and the quicker the body can heal and repair itself.

It's like a carpenter doing some repairs on your house. If he is tired and slow, it will take a long time to do the job, but if he is energetic and anxious to complete the task it will take a fraction of the time. When metabolism is functioning at a higher level or cells are like an energized carpenter anxious to complete the repairs while depressed metabolism causes the cells to work slower, and consequently healing and repair progress slower.

I believe coconut oil used regularly can be one of the best natural treatments for chronic fatigue there is. Here is what one 46-year old man experienced:

“I never thought I was trouble with chronic fatigue syndrome. I was healthy. I ate what I considered a good diet-low in fats, lot of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. But I noticed as I was approaching my mid-forties my level was decreasing rapidly. Even modest amount of yard work became a drudgery. After a couple of hours I came in exhausted and it took me two days to recover. By 8:00 pm every day I was exhausted, even though I have a desk job. I found myself going to bed earlier. Life was slowing down and I missed the energy I once had. I assumed that what I was experiencing was

just the consequence of growing older and left it at that. But then I began to wonder. I saw other people, much older than I, who were more physically active and had much more energy. I then suspected something was wrong. I began to seek ways to improve my health. I learned about coconut and began to eat it in place of other oils. I did this not to cure any illness but simply to improve my overall health. It was several months later when I noticed that the energy I used to have had returned. I no longer wanted to go to sleep at 8:00 p.m but stayed up till 11:00 without problem. I got less sleep but had more energy. Improvement came so gradually that I didn't notice the change until after several months. And it wasn't until later that I even thought it might be related to coconut oil. Since I've been using coconut oil I have not been lethargic during the day, as I was in the past: I have more energy and accomplish more. I feel really good.

### ***PROSTATE ENLARGEMENT***

If you are male, chances are you will suffer some type of prostate problem during your lifetime. The most common prostate problem is benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or prostate enlargement. Nearly half of all men between the ages of 40 and 59 and as many as 90 percent of those in their 70s and 80s have some symptoms of BPH. It has become so bad that it's almost an invariable consequence of aging. Prostate enlargement, however, is not simply a result of aging, lifestyle and diet play an important role. BPH is only a major problem in westernized countries. Those men who live in less prosperous localities of the world where local foods are produced and consumed don't appear to be troubled by it as much.

The exact cause of BPH is unknown. The most popular theory focuses on the male hormone dihydrotestosterone (DHT) as the culprit. It is believed that as we age more testosterone is converted into DHT which accumulates in the prostate gland. DHT encourages the growth of prostate cells. This causes the prostate to enlarge, as it does so it pinches off the urethra, the tube through which urine flows from the bladder. This causes frequent and impaired urinations, especially at night. And is often associated with inflammation of the gland. While not normally cancerous, it sets the stage for such a condition to exist.

A logical treatment for BPH is to block the conversion of testosterone into DHT. The drug finasteride works on this principle and has been effective. A popular herbal remedy which also appears to block the toxic effect of excess DHT formations is saw palmetto. This subtropical plant is found in the southeastern part of the United States.

Native Indians of Florida and early settlers used the berries from this plant as a folk medicine to treat reproductive disorders, urinary diseases, and colds. In women it has been used to increase the supply of mother's milk and to relieve painful periods.

Studies show saw palmetto berries are very effective at reducing the effects of BPH and are remarkably safe. Compared with Proscar (a much –prescribed BPH drug), saw palmetto is more effective in reducing prostate symptoms. Numerous studies have shown saw palmetto extract to be effective in nearly 90 percent of patients usually in a period of four to six weeks. In contrast, Proscar is effective in reducing the symptoms in less than 37 percent after the drug for a full year. Saw palmetto has no adverse side effects. Proscar, on the other hand, may cause impotence, decreased libido, and birth defects.

Saw palmetto has gained a reputation among both alternative and conventional health care professionals as an effective treatment for BPH. It is one herb that even conventional medicine recognizes as safe and effective.

The medicinal effects of saw palmetto are derived primarily from fatty acids in the berries. It is interesting to note that saw palmetto is a member of the palm family and the berries are relatives to the coconut. Many of the fatty acids in saw palmetto berries are MCFA similar to those in coconut. Dr Jon Kabara, an expert in lipid (fat) biochemistry, suggests that since the fatty acids in saw palmetto berries inhibit the formation of DHT hormone so should the fatty acids in coconut oil. The conclusion we can derive from this is that coconut oil should be just as effective or even more so in preventing and treating BPH as saw palmetto extract.

### ***HEALTH BENEFITS OF COCONUT OIL***

Research and clinical observation have shown that medium-chain fatty acids, like those found in coconut oil, may provide a wide range of health benefits. Some of these are summarized below:

- Kills viruses that cause mononucleosis, influenza, hepatitis C, measles, herpes, AIDS and other illness
- Kills bacteria that cause pneumonia, carache, throat infections, dental cavaties, food poisoning, urinary tract infections, meningitis, gonorrhea, and dozens of other diseases
- Kills fungi and yeast that cause candida, jock itch, ringworm, athlete's foot, thrush, diaper rash and other infections
- Expels or kills tapeworms, lice, giardia, and other parasites
- Provides a nutritional source of quick energy
- Boosts energy and endurance enhancing physical and athletic performance
- Improves digestion and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins and amino acids
- Improves insulin secretion and utilization of blood glucose
- Relieves stress on pancrease and enzyme systems of the body
- Reduces symptoms associated with pancreatitis
- Helps relieve symptoms and reduce health risks associated with diabetes
- Reduces problems associated with malabsorption syndrome and cystic fibrosis
- Improves calcium and magnesium absorption and supports the development of strong bones and teeth
- Helps protect against osteoporosis
- Helps relieve symptoms of gallbladder disease
- Relieves symptoms associated with Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and stomach ulcers
- Relieves pain and irritation caused by hemorrhoids
- Reduces chronic inflammation
- Supports tissue healing and repair
- Supports and aids immune system function
- Helps protect the body from breast, colon, and other cancers
- Is heart healthy; does not increase blood cholesterol or platelet stickiness

- Helps prevent heart disease, atherosclerosis, and stroke
- Helps prevent high blood pressure
- Helps prevent periodontal disease and tooth decay
- Functions as a protective antioxidant
- Helps to protect the body from harmful free-radicals that promote premature aging and degenerative disease
- Does not deplete the body's antioxidant reserve like other oils do
- Improves utilization of essential fatty acids and protects them from oxidation
- Helps relieve symptoms associated with chronic fatigue syndrome
- Relieves symptoms associated with benign prostatic hyperplasia (prostate enlargement)
- Reduces epileptic seizures
- Helps protect against kidneys disease and bladder infections
- Helps prevent liver disease
- Is lower in calories than all other fats
- Supports thyroid function
- Promotes loss of excess weight by increasing metabolic rate
- Is utilized by the body to produce energy in preference to being stored as body fat like other dietary fats.
- Helps prevent obesity and overweight problems
- Applied topically helps to form a chemical barrier on the skin to ward off infection
- Reduces symptoms associated with psoriasis, eczema, and dermatitis
- Supports the natural chemical balance of the skin
- Softens skin and helps relieve dryness and flaking
- Prevents wrinkles, sagging skin, and age spots
- Promotes healthy-looking hair and complexion
- Provides protection from the damaging effects of ultraviolet radiation from the sun
- Controls dandruff
- Helps you look and feel younger
- Is resistant to oxidation, so has a long shelf life
- Does not form harmful by-products when heated to normal cooking temperatures like other vegetable oils do
- Has no harmful or discomforting side effects
- Is completely non-toxic to humans

## ***CONCLUSION***

Coconut oil is classified as a “functional food” – a food that provides health benefits beyond its nutritional contents.

Scientific research is uncovering an impressive list of dietary and medicinal benefits of coconut oil.

For this reason, coconut oil is becoming known as “The Healthiest Oil on Earth”

NUTRITIOUS ways of getting your daily requirements of immune system booster natural coconut oil: virgin coconut oil, desiccated coconut on pastries; fresh young coconut dessert; dehydrated shredded coconut crackers; coconut noodles and coconut milk (gata) for entrees, and fresh buko juice.

### ***WHY FILIPINOS ARE LAST TO KNOW ABOUT WONDER FOOD***

IF COCONUT oil is a wonder food, how come Filipinos who live in a veritable coconut paradise are the last to know?

Whatever scientific studies on coconuts there are have been drowned by “Big Business-created anti-saturated fat hype” to push their soybean oil product that was losing out to coconut oil and singled out the latter as containing cholesterol associated with heart disease.

Secondly, lack of research funding has reduced the truths about coconut oil as “indigenous food traits” unsubstantiated by scientific evidence. At the height of the anti-saturated fat campaign, the country could not muster a counter information drive even as the industry was then awash with funds from the coconut levy.

While Dr. Conrado Dayrit’s own study in the 1980s operated on private funding by the Philippine Coconut Research Development Foundation of which he was a director; it was hampered by lack of concerted action from the industry, the government and the scientific.

Thirdly, the indigenous natural process that produces non-hydrogenated, non-refined, non-bleached and non-deodorized virgin coconut oil lost out to commerce. The few precious liters of healthy virgin coconut oil does not have a price in the market to compete with mass-produced cooking oil.

The SARS scare has triggered renewed interest on traditional and indigenous health products. Virgin coconut oil, albeit being a potent. Healing food in abundance, is just one of many from nature overlooked by the age of technology. It should be deemed as only a part of a total health care picture. Virgin coconut oil should be viewed not as the answer to SARS but as a question of living in sync with nature.

### ***HOW TO MAKE VIRGIN COCONUT OIL***

1. Select about 8 mature coconuts. Make sure dehusked shell is intact and has not breakage and that there is water inside the nut. To test, shake it.
2. Split the shell into halves, take out the meat from the shell with a sharp knife, a scraper or shredder (kudkuran). You can have this done in the neighborhood market.
3. Collect the shredded meat together to be cold-pressed into coconut milk. Press the bunch of shredded meat with the coconut water by any means that does not require heat. The first cocomilk called “kakana gata” comes out. Strain this “first” milk through a cheese cloth (katsa) to separate the sediments. There are cold-pressing machines available in the bigger wet markets like Marikina, Sta. Ana, Nepa-Q-Mart in Cubao, to cold-press your shredded cocomeat.

4. Your 8 nuts will make about 4 glasses of coco milk or half a litre. Let the filtered coco milk in the pitcher settle overnight. The coco milk will separate into three parts: 1/3 oil will rise to the top and the shredded meat will settle at the bottom, with coconut water in between.
5. To separate the oil, refrigerate until the oil turns into coconut butter form. Skim the coco butter and separate into another container. Let stand at room temperature to become virgin coconut oil ready to take. Avoid direct sunlight for the oil to stay clear. Shelf life is good for 90 days.