

## **Coconut Oil: Nutritious and Delicious**

You can't help but notice these days how more and more companies promote their foods as non-fat, reduced fat, or without trans fat . It is commonly regarded as “healthy eating” to avoid fats altogether. However, the truth is, while the general population *is* eating too much saturated fat in the way of deep fried foods, creamed sauces, dressings, dairy, cheese and red meat, our bodies *do* require healthy saturated and unsaturated fats daily. The healthy fats are the plant oils, such as olive oil, flax seed oil, sesame oil and coconut oil to name a few. So, why do we need these fats?

Fats are required to transport the fat soluble vitamins A,D,E,K to the cells. They play an important role in the integrity of the cell membrane and are needed to make hormones. In particular, insulin for regulating your blood sugar, thyroid hormones to help regulate your metabolism, and cortisol to help deal with your every day stress. The healthy fats, often referred to as the Omega 3's, help with internal inflammation within your body such as your blood vessels and digestive tract. Even more importantly, fats are what makes your food taste good and provides satiety to your meals. If we take the fat out of food you will still be reaching for more food as the body has not been “satisfied”. Also, it's important to be “label” conscious because if it says low fat, they could have added more sugar to make it palatable.

One healthy fat I particularly advocate is coconut oil/butter. This is one of the misleading fats because it is a high saturated fat and gets a bad reputation. Many of the saturated and unsaturated fats found in plants, meat and dairy are composed of long chain fatty acids (LCFA), but coconut oil/butter is a medium chain fatty acid (MCFA). These fats have lauric acid and capric acid which provide anti-fungal, anti-tumor, anti-viral properties and contribute to the health of the immune system (predominantly the stomach). It kills unwanted yeast flat out! The other great feature coconut oil is it is absorbed directly from the small intestine to the liver where it is converted to quick energy and not stored as body fat!

Coconut oil should be stored at room temperature. If you store it in the fridge it will be too hard to dish out. I would recommend using the raw organic higher quality coconut oil for eating on toast or baking, and the lower quality coconut for sautéing. It is a safe oil for stir fries, as long as you do not over heat. Coconut milk makes good stir fries with any of your favourite spices like curry. Be sure to buy the organic regular coconut nut milk, not the light version, as it has the anti-microbial properties removed. Coconut water is an excellent gentle energy drink. It's sweet, low calories, no fat in the water and is filled with a lot of electrolytes. A great alternative to sports drinks.

So no worries, start cooking with coconut oil. Start adding variety to your meals and who doesn't love the taste of coconut?