

Greenwich Sentinel



Building a Strong Community Together † December 11, 2015

Why I'm Crazy for Coconuts



By **Julia Chiappetta**
Sentinel Columnist

Coconut oil is one of nature's perfect foods; it has many benefits that will surprise you. It's an edible oil extracted from the meat of mature coconuts, harvested from the coconut palm, and used in food and cosmetics.

It's easy to purchase, but be sure to use the unrefined oil. Here's why: Refined oil has undergone bleaching and deodorizing, necessary because of the unsanitary conditions in which farmers often store the coconut solids before they send them to a factory for processing. Unrefined oil, also known as virgin coconut oil, is produced by mechanically pressing the coconut

meat soon after picking, and is therefore not subject to any chemical treatment. It retains more of the healthy compounds naturally present.

I store one jar on my kitchen counter and take one teaspoon by mouth each morning. I keep another on my bath vanity to apply to my skin and hair. Coconut oil is also great for your teeth and gums. Try the bacteria-beating "pulling" technique for optimum oral health and whiter teeth—swishing one to two teaspoons of the oil around your mouth for 20 minutes in the morning (the solid oil will quickly melt in your mouth), then spitting it out and rinsing thoroughly with water.

Good brands include: Artisana, Nutiva, Maison Orphée, Ojio and Dr. Bronner's. Here are just a few of the amazing benefits of coconut oil:

- *It's a healing agent for wounds*
- *A healthy saturated fat*
- *A brain booster (seniors take note!)*
- *It improves & aids digestion*
- *Increases metabolism*
- *Controls blood sugar*
- *Has anti-inflammatory properties*
- *It's antimicrobial*
- *It's great tasting for cooking and baking*
- *It helps burn fat*

Studies have shown that coconut oil can help our bodies resist both viruses and bacteria, and help fight

off yeast, fungus and candida. It can also positively affect our hormones for thyroid and blood-sugar control. Coconut oil has special fats called medium chain triglycerides. It has been shown that breaking down these healthy fats in the liver leads to efficient burning of energy. And the oil has antioxidant properties that are vitally important, since oxidation is considered a major contributor to cardiovascular problems and skin aging.

Coconut water is a good choice and a good source of natural vitamins, trace elements, amino acids, enzymes, antioxidants, phytonutrients and electrolytes. It's low in sugar and high in cytokines, or plant hormones that are alkalizing, meaning that they help even out the ill-effects of acidic foods that make up most diets.

Give coconut oil and coconut water a try. And remember... be good to your body each and every day!

Julia Chiappetta is the author of "Breast Cancer: The Notebook" (Gemini Media, 2006) and is also the owner of Julia Chiappetta Consulting. She lives in Cos Cob.