

# Coconut oil

Coconut oil is unusually rich in short and medium chain [fatty acids](#). Lauric acid, the major fatty acid from the fat of the coconut, has long been recognized for the unique properties that it lends to non-food uses in the cosmetic and soap industry. My favorite source for coconut soap products is [here](#). More recently, lauric acid has been recognized for its unique properties in foods which are related to its antibacterial, antiviral and antiprotozoal functions.

Desiccated coconut is about 69% coconut fat, as is creamed coconut. Full coconut milk is approximately 24% fat. Approximately 50% of the [fatty acids](#) in coconut fat are lauric acid. Lauric acid is a medium-chain fatty acid, which has the additional beneficial function of being transformed into a substance called "monolaurin" in the human body. Monolaurin is an antibacterial, antiviral and antiprotozoal substance used by the human body to destroy lipid-coated viruses such as HIV, herpes, influenza, various pathogenic bacteria and protozoa such as giardia lamblia.



Capric acid, another one of coconut's medium-chain fatty acids has been added to the list of coconut's antimicrobial components. Capric acid is found in large amounts in coconuts and it has a similar beneficial function when it is transformed into "monocaprin" in the human body. Monocaprin has been shown to have antiviral effects against HIV and is being tested for its antiviral effects against herpes simplex and antibacterial effects against chlamydia and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Also, research has shown that natural coconut fat in the diet leads to a normalization of body lipids, protects against alcohol damage to the liver, and improves the [immune system](#)'s anti-inflammatory response.

The medium-chain [fatty acids](#) and monoglycerides found primarily in coconut oil have tremendous healing power. It is rare in the history of medicine to find substances which have such useful properties and still be without toxicity or even harmful side effects.

The food industry has long been aware that the functional properties of coconut oil are unsurpassed by other commercially available oils. Unfortunately, in the United States, during the 1980s and 1990s, the commercial interests of the U.S. domestic fats and oils industry with their anti-saturated fat agenda were successful at driving down usage of coconut oil.

## Coconut oil and the anti-saturated fat campaign

Coconut oil is 92% saturated.

The coconut industry has suffered for more than 30 years from abusive rhetoric from the consumer activist group "Center for Science in the Public Interest" (CSPI), from the American [Soybean](#) Association (ASA) and other members of the edible oil industry.

How did the anti-saturated fat campaign begin? It really began in the late 1950s, when a researcher in Minnesota announced that the [heart disease](#) epidemic was being caused by hydrogenated vegetable fats. The edible oil industry's response at that time was to claim that it was only the SATURATED FAT in the hydrogenated oils which was causing the problem. The industry then announced that it would be changing to 'partially hydrogenated' fats and that this would solve the problem. In fact, there was no change at all because the oils were already being partially hydrogenated, and the levels of saturated fatty acids remained about the same, as did the levels of the [trans fatty acids](#). The only thing that really changed was the term for hydrogenation or hardening listed on the food labels.

As a result of the acceptance of this new 'anti-saturated fat' agenda by the domestic edible oils industry, there was a gradual increase in the emphasis on replacing 'saturated fats' in the diet with larger amounts of the 'polyunsaturated fats'. The government dietary guidelines remain very 'anti-saturated fat' to this day.

In the early sixties, the only tropical oil singled out as high in saturated fats was coconut oil. Palm oil had not entered the United States food supply to any extent and had not become a commercial threat to the domestic oils.

In the early 1970s, although a number of researchers were voicing concerns about [trans fatty acids](#), the edible oil industry and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) were engaging in a revolving-door exchange which would condemn the saturated fats, promote the increasing consumption of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils and hide the trans fatty acid problem.

In 1971, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s general counsel became president of the edible oil trade association, and he in turn was replaced at the FDA by a food lawyer who had represented the edible oil industry.

From that point on, the truth about any real effects of the dietary fats had to play catch-up. The U.S. edible oil industry sponsored 'information' to educate the public, and the natural dairy and animal fats industries were inept at countering any of that misinformation. To learn more about how powerful public relations firms shape the public's awareness and beliefs, read the "[Why you believe what you believe](#)" page.

Not being domestically grown in the U.S., coconut oil and palm oil were not around to defend themselves at that time. That is how coconut oil fell out of favor with the public.



Eating raw coconut would clearly be the best option, but most of us do not have access to this, so using coconut oil is the next best thing. One way you will want to consider adding coconut oil to your diet is to use it exclusively for all your cooking and sautéing needs. Because coconut oil is a completely saturated fat it does not form dangerous [trans fatty acids](#). My favorite source for coconut oil is [here](#).

Reference website: <http://www.healingdaily.com/detoxification-diet/coconut-oil.htm>