

Medicinal Use of Coconut

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Abstract: *Cocosnucifera* (coconut) is a well-known plant used in the Indian system of medicine. Folkloremedicine claims its uses in diabetes, diarrhea, cancer, etc. Coconut and its by-products have been used for centuries as culinary, cosmetic, and medicinal agents. More recently, virgin coconut oil (VCO) is gaining recognition as a functional food due to its perceived health benefits. This review presents the medical properties of the coconut

Keywords: endosperm, copra, coir

1. Introduction

The **coconut palm** (*Cocosnucifera*), is a member of the family Arecaceae (palm family). It is the only accepted species in the genus *Cocos*.^[2] The term **coconut** can refer to the entire **coconut palm**, the seed, or the fruit, which, botanically, is a drupe, not a nut. The spelling **cocoanut** is an different from any other fruits because they contain a large quantity of "water" and when immature they are known as tender-nuts or jelly-nuts and may be harvested for drinking. When mature, they still contain some water and can be used as seednuts or processed to give oil from the kernel, charcoal from the hard shell and coir from the fibrous husk. The endosperm is initially in its nuclear phase suspended within the coconut water. As development continues, cellular layers of endosperm deposit along the walls of the coconut, becoming the edible coconut "flesh".^[5] When dried, the coconut flesh is called copra. The oil and milk derived from it are commonly used in cooking and frying; coconut oil is also widely used in soaps and cosmetics. The clear liquid coconut water within is a refreshing drink. The husks and leaves can be used as material to make a variety of products for furnishing and decorating. It also has cultural and religious significance in many societies that use it. archaic form of the word.^[3] The term is derived from 16th-century Portuguese and Spanish *coco*, meaning "head" or "skull",^[4] from the three indentations on the coconut shell that resemble facial features.

Found throughout the tropic and subtropic area, the coconut is known for its great versatility as seen in the many uses of its different parts. Coconuts are part of the daily diets of many people.. Coconuts are part of the daily diets of many people. Coconuts are different from any other fruits because they contain a large quantity of "water" and when immature they are known as tender-nuts or jelly-nuts and may be harvested for drinking. When mature, they still contain some water and can be used as seednuts or processed to give oil from the kernel, charcoal from the hard shell and coir from the fibrous husk. The endosperm is initially in its nuclear phase suspended within the coconut water. As development continues, cellular layers of endosperm deposit along the walls of the coconut, becoming the edible coconut "flesh".^[5] When dried, the coconut flesh is called copra. The oil and milk derived from it are commonly used in cooking and

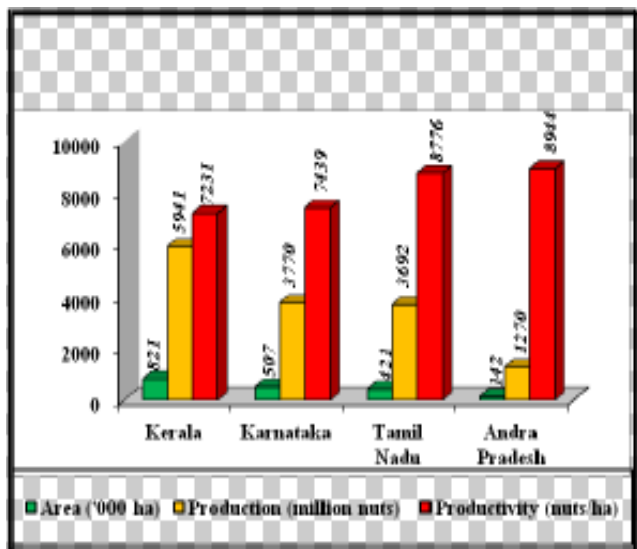
frying; coconut oil is also widely used in soaps and cosmetics. The clear liquid coconut water within is a refreshing drink. The husks and leaves can be used as material to make a variety of products for furnishing and decorating. It also has cultural and religious significance in many societies that use it.



2. Coconut Plantation in India

Traditional areas of coconut cultivation in India are the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal and the islands of Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar. Four southern states combined account for almost 92% of the total production in the country: Kerala (45.22%), Tamil Nadu (26.56%), Karnataka (10.85%), and Andhra Pradesh (8.93%)[6] Other states, such as Goa, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, and those in the northeast (Tripura and Assam) account for the remaining 8.44%. Kerala, which has the largest number of coconut trees, is famous for its coconut-based products—coconut water, copra, coconut oil, coconut cake (also called coconut meal, copra cake, or copra meal), coconut toddy, coconut shell-based products, coconut wood-based products, coconut leaves, and coir pith.

Various terms, such as copra and coir, are derived from the native Malayalam language. In Kerala, the coconut tree is called "Thengu" also termed as *kalpa vriksham*, which essentially means all parts of a coconut tree is useful some way or other.



Coconut oil medicinal uses

- Virgin coconut oil tastes and smells like coconut. Expeller pressed oil has no scent or taste and both types can be used medicinally.[7]
- Kills bacteria causing urinary tract infections, gonorrhea, gum disease, staphylococcus, MRSA...
- Destroys fungus causing candida.
- Kills viruses causing flu, infectious disease, typhoid, HIV...
- Inhibits parasite growth such as tapeworm, liver flukes, giardia...
- Eases acid reflux, relieves gallbladder disease.
- Enhances proper bowel function and lowers incidence of hemorrhoids when oil is consumed.
- Relieves and heals intestinal disorders, ulcers, colitis, IBS, and Crohn's disease.
- Stabilizes blood sugar and insulin production.
- Eases neuropathies and itching from diabetes.
- Protects against osteoporosis and reduces problems from cystic fibrosis.
- Enhances pancreatic function, enzyme production and reduces pancreatitis.
- Improves magnesium and calcium absorption, promoting stronger bones.
- Reduces joint and muscle inflammation, supporting repair of tissues.
- Regulates thyroid function.
- Protects against cancers of colon, breast, and digestive tract.
- Medium chain fatty acids (MCFA) protect against development of Alzheimer's disease.
- MCFA strengthen heart and circulatory system protecting against atherosclerosis and heart disease.
- Prevents oxidation of fatty acids.
- Provides antioxidants to fight free radicals slowing aging and degenerative diseases such as arthritis.
- Relieves symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome.
- Reduces incidence and intensity of epileptic seizures.
- Stabilizes female hormones reducing hot flashes and vaginal dryness during menopause.
- Lessens symptoms associated with prostate enlargement.
- Strengthens the liver and protects against degeneration.
- Soothes earaches when mixed with garlic and olive oil.

Topical uses for coconut oil:

- Forms a chemical barrier on skin to protect and heal infections.
- Topical applications relieve pain and swelling from hemorrhoids.
- Moisturizes and softens dry skin.
- Reduces bags, puffiness and wrinkles under eyes.
- Lessens occurrence and appearance of varicose veins.
- Preps skin before shaving.
- Mixed with baking soda, coconut oil makes an effective toothpaste.
- Soothes sunburned skin and promotes healing of burns and blisters.
- Heals psoriasis and eczema lesions.[8]
- Stops pain, burning, and itching of bug and snake bites.
- Prevents itching from poison ivy, oak, and sumac.
- Promotes firm skin tone, preventing age spots, sagging and wrinkles.
- Eliminates head lice.
- Removes makeup easily.
- Heals nail fungus under finger and toenails
- Prevent nosebleeds by applying light film inside nostrils.
- In combination with cornstarch and baking soda, coconut oil makes an effective deodorant.
- Makes an excellent massage oil, a natural personal lubricant, and great sunscreen.
- Conditions hair, prevents split ends, reduces frizz, controls flaky scalp and dandruff.
- Removes scars and stretch marks.
- Repairs cracked, sore, dry nipples from nursing.
- Heals diaper rash and removes cradle cap on babies.

Nutritional uses for coconut oil:

- Enhances absorption of nutrients and improves digestion.
- Provides a quick energy source and stimulates metabolism.[9]
- Produces immediate, usable energy source rather than being stored as fat.
- Increases metabolic rate, stabilizes body weight, and controls food cravings.
- Enriches milk supply for breast-feeding women.
- Doesn't form harmful by-products during cooking when used at high heat.





Safe and Side Effects of Coconut

Coconut oil is safe for most people if used in amounts commonly found in foods. It also appears to be safe when applied to the scalp in combination with other herbs.

Since coconut oil has a high fat content, there is concern that it might increase weight if used in large amounts or that it might increase cholesterol levels. However, these concerns have not been proven in scientific research.

The safety of coconut oil used in medicinal amounts is unknown.

Special Precautions & Warnings:

Pregnancy and breast-feeding: Coconut oil is safe for pregnant and breast-feeding women when used in the amounts normally found in the diet. But the safety of using coconut oil in larger amounts is not known. It's best to stick to food amounts if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.[10]

High cholesterol: There is concern that coconut oil might increase total cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol. But there is contradictory evidence that shows that coconut oil might actually increase levels of "good" cholesterol and have little to no effect on total or "bad" cholesterol levels.



3. Conclusion

Each stage of coconut is important for human beings. It helps in many aspects in our day to day life. Too much intake of coconut is harmful for human beings as it has high

cholesterol. So I conclude coconut has high medicinal uses for human beings.

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