Should Diabetics Add Coconut Oil to Their Diet?

by REBECCA PACIOREK

Coconut Oil and Diabetes

There's been much debate over the use of coconut oil and whether or not it’s “good” for you. In this article, we’ll discuss the many benefits of coconut oil for diabetes, the potential drawbacks and what to be aware of and we will look at cooking with coconut oil. Let’s get started on what you need to know about coconut oil and diabetes.

Coconut Oil Benefits for Diabetes

There have been many studies done that show using coconut oil in your diet may help improve cholesterol levels. It can typically help in increasing the HDL cholesterol and lowering the LDL cholesterol.

Also, the use of coconut oil has been proven to help reduce body fat, particularly in the abdominal area. And, that, in turn, is good for preventing heart disease.

Another benefit to using coconut oil for diabetics is that it can both help regulate your blood sugar levels and control hunger and general cravings for sweets. It also helps fight inflammation.

Surprisingly, coconut oil has also shown to improve the absorption of calcium and magnesium into your body. This proves especially beneficial for enhancing bone and dental health.

Scientists are currently studying the effects of coconut oil on Alzheimer’s patients as there is some evidence to show that the oil may help slow the progression. That’s certainly something to watch for in the future.

Is Coconut Oil Good or Bad for Diabetics?

While there is much evidence to show coconut oil as a superfood, there are a few things to take note of.

The main argument against coconut oil is that it is still considered a saturated fat – and saturated fats are not healthy for you. But, not all fats are created equally.

It’s important to take into consideration that “these effects are for the most part associated with animal fats and not with plant fats,” according to the Diabetic Council.

If you are going to use coconut oil, it is suggested that you use virgin organic oil. The coconut oils that have been processed have higher trans fats which are not healthy. Also, the processing tends to take out some of the health benefits that help to fight inflammation and assist in the absorption of calcium and magnesium. When using coconut oil in recipes and cooking, be sure to count the calories and fat still.

Also, coconut oil has 117 calories and 14 grams of fat.

Cooking With Coconut Oil 101

Cooking with coconut oil is a great way to get some of this “good” fat into your diet, but it is a little different than using other fats in cooking. Here are some tips that we found for using it in cooking:

- Do not use high heat when cooking with coconut oil — this leads to a breakdown of the oil and decreases health benefits.
- Coconut oil is solid at room temperature and melts at 76 degrees. This means that you do not need to refrigerate it like you would butter or margarine and it can be stored nearly anyplace.
- To melt it for a recipe, heat on low in a basic saucepan.
- Make sure all ingredients are at room temperature if using it in place of shortening/butter/oil in a recipe. If you add coconut oil to a bowl full of cold ingredients, the oil will start to solidify on contact.

One excellent tip we found is to melt the oil down and put it into pop-out silicone ice cube trays to solidify. That will equal approximately two tablespoons of oil, and once they solidify, you can pop them out and store them in a jar to be ready for small batches. It’s much easier than trying to chip away at a hard jar full of oil for a recipe.

Coconut Oil Recipes

There are so many ways to use coconut oil in cooking. It is used in a lot of Thai and Indian food and is part of what gives those foods such a distinctive taste. Using coconut oil in baking (especially no-bake cookies) seems to be very popular.

I also use coconut oil and protein powder to make oatmeal breakfast cookies. My son loves the idea of cookies for breakfast. I also find cookies like these to be a great pick me up for some energy in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon slump, and they are certainly healthier than a trip to the vending machine.

If you're looking for some delicious coconut oil recipes, a general search in both Google and Pinterest will show many recipe resources.

Do you use coconut oil in your cooking? If so, we’d love to hear about your experience. Feel free to let us know in the comments below and share any great recipes you have found.