

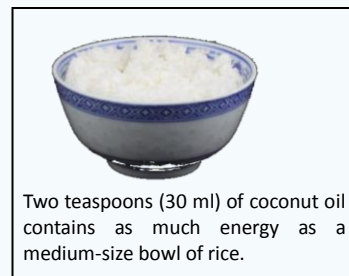


## Coconut Oil: A Miraculous Oil?

In recent years, coconut oil and related products have been very popular; it is even said that the oil can help control body weight effectively, prevent osteoporosis, improve low thyroid function, control blood sugar, and even prevent cancers! Is coconut oil as miraculous as these claims sound?

### *Can coconut oil control body weight?*

The fact is, coconut oil can cause weight gain too. Like other oils, each gram of coconut oil has an energy value of 9 kcal. Two teaspoons (30 ml) of coconut oil contains 230 kcal of energy, which is the same amount of energy from one medium-size bowl of rice. From the viewpoint of energy, excessive intake of coconut oil can lead to weight gain.



### *Coconut oil: Is it as miraculous as it is claimed to be?*



Coconut oil has a 90% saturated fatty acid content; excessive intake of saturated fatty acids from diet can raise cholesterol level and increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Also, the American Dietetic Association (ADA) and the Dietitians of Canada both claim that so far the clinical evidence is not convincing enough to prove the health benefits of coconut oil.

Several authoritative bodies such as the World Health Organization, ADA and the National Heart Foundation of Australia all recommend a limit on the intake of saturated fatty acids, including those from coconut oil, to lower the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

### *What edible oil should I use?*

Since there is not enough evidence so far to prove that coconut oil can prevent diseases or alleviate any health problems, we recommend the use of healthy vegetable oils, such as canola oil, olive oil, grapeseed oil, sunflower (seed) oil, corn oil, etc. to replace coconut oil as they contain a rich amount of unsaturated fatty acids. Moreover, these oils are also rich in vitamin E, which is healthy for the body.

No matter it is healthy vegetable oils or any other kind of oil that you use, limit the amount to be used, as each gram of oil/fat contains 9 kcal of energy. For prevention of obesity, an amount not exceeding 6 teaspoons of cooking oil per person per day is recommended.

To know more about ...

- ✧ healthy eating, please visit 'Health Zone' website at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ 'Health@work.hk Project', please visit <http://www.healthatwork.gov.hk>