



Health Benefits of Coconut: A Review

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Abstract

The coconut fruit obtained from the coconut palm has numerous medical and commercial benefits. The various health related properties of coconut water, coconut milk, coconut cream, creamed coconut and other derivatives from the fruit have been highlighted in this article. The article provides an overall summary of different utilities from the coconut for which it is being used as a principal ingredient by almost every consumer in Asian and Western countries in cooking and eating practices.

Key-Words: Coconut, Medicinal properties

Introduction

Coconut water is the most significant derivative from the coconut which is referred to as the clear liquid inside both mature and immature coconuts, the fruits obtained from the coconut palm. In earlier stages, it is a suspension of the endosperm of the coconuts at the development of the nucleus of the fruit. As maturity develops in the fruit, the endosperm gets deposited into the cellular phase and deposition sets in the mature fruit (Paniappan, 2002). Coconut water is a highly demanded drink in the tropics, especially in Southeast Asia, Pacific Islands, Africa, and the Caribbean. In these regions it is available in fresh, canned, or bottled forms for consumers (Conis, 2011).

Biochemical and medicinal properties of coconut water

The various derivatives from the fruit are well acceptable to consumers of all age groups, having certain limitations its high saturated fat content. Coconut has been recently proved to be a source of saturated fat that would not elevate the lipid profile in the body, except High Density Lipoprotein (HDL), which is good for health and absolutely no contraindications now to any age.

Coconut is a highly valued ingredient in our eating practice for its enormous medical benefits. However, due to its high lipid and saturated fat content it is discouraged in the diet of patients suffering from cardiovascular ailments and hypertension.

Coconut water acts as a natural energy or sports drink, as it is rich in mineral content especially in potassium levels. Coconut water has a high demand among consumers for its nil fat content and low contents of carbohydrates, calories, and sodium. Coconut water serves as a potential healthy drink for adults and old persons as it has promising health utilities (Yong *et al.*, 2009).

Coconut water is considered to be sterile unless the fruit is damaged from an external source. There have been reports of coconut water used for intravenous administration where normal saline solution for medical purpose was unavailable in developing countries or on the war front (Campbell *et al.*, 2000). Coconut water is rich in mineral content with high potassium and anti-oxidant contents which has various medical utilities. Coconut water also contains cytokinin which is one of the beneficial components in it (Ganguly, 2013a;b).

Coconuts in which water to be used for drinking purpose are harvested from the coconut palms when they appear green in color. Coconuts sometimes due to natural calamities fell on the ground and they are susceptible to get damaged and get exposed for being damaged by insects or pests and animals (Ganguly, 2013a;b).

Conclusion

Coconut is a highly valued ingredient in our eating practice for its enormous medical benefits. However, due to its high lipid and saturated fat content it is discouraged in the diet of patients suffering from cardiovascular ailments and hypertension.

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