The Incredible Secrets of Coconuts

April's Open Thread

A MIDWESTERN DOCTOR
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I feel one of the biggest issues in healthcare is that since everything is so rushed, there's very little time for doctors to talk with their patients, and as a result, many of the most important parts of medicine get lost. Because of that, my goal was always to be able to reply to be able to correspond with everyone who reached out to me (e.g., through comments).

Since there are now over 336,000 readers here, it's no longer feasible for me to do that and still have the time to write. Because of this, I decided the best solution was to have monthly open threads where people could ask whatever they wanted on any topic (e.g., any lingering questions from the previous months) and I would make a point to always reply to them.

Alongside these open threads, I like to highlight a topic that I believe is worth exploring, even if it doesn't warrant a full article on its own. This month, I'm focusing on the often-overlooked wonders of coconuts as I often reflect on the small things I take for granted and how different life would be without them—and coconuts frequently make that list.

Note: one of the things that is extremely frustrating about nutritional guidelines is that they always tell you what you should ***not*** *eat rather than what you should. One of the wonderful things about coconuts is how much easier having them be a dietary staple makes the rest of your diet.*

Lastly, as a quick update on the DMSO project. Due to reader request (and very compelling testimonials I've received), the first article I am releasing is DMSO's uses in neurology. In the process of doing that, I realized this was a very challenging topic to start with (as there are so many neurology articles in the master document I've compiled), so it took about a week longer than I expected to extract and sort all of them, and rather than do a single article, it needs to be split into three parts (neurodegenerative disorders, spinal and nerve issues, and traumatic injuries to the nervous system like strokes).

On one hand I feel bad about this, as despite my absolute best efforts to prioritize getting this done as quickly as possible without cutting corners, I am now about a month behind where I'd hoped to be. However, I am also excited to **finally** be at my favorite part of this process (synthesizing the data and unraveling the fascinating insights within it) and provided nothing too difficult comes up during the upcoming work week, I hope to have the first installment (neurodegenerative, autoimmune and psychiatric conditions plus developmental disability) out this Saturday. This has been a rough hump to get over (finding the time to identify every medically relevant DMSO study, then summarize and sort them), but once it's done, I know it will help a lot of people, and I sincerely thank you for your continued support and patience as I work on it.

Cooking Oils

As the years have gone by, there has been increasing awareness that seed oils (specifically their omega 6 fats) are not good for us, but unfortunately, even if we want to avoid them they are in almost every processed food (e.g., infant formula, due to outdated science from the 1960s is required to contain large amounts of seed oils). This touches upon a longstanding observation I've made—if something toxic is on the market place, in most cases, regardless of how much the public protests against its use, normally only way it ever gets phased out is if a less toxic substitute is found for it

Note: examples include antibiotics replacing highly dangerous antiserums, ultrasounds replacing routine prenatal x-rays,the introduction of catalytic converters making lead no longer work in gasoline or the 1986 Vaccine Injury Act forcing the development of the less toxic DTaP vaccine to replace DTwP).

As such, I've put a lot of thought into which oils could replace the high omega 6 oils we routinely use (e.g., soy oil). If we look at it from a standpoint of omega 6 content and omega 3 content, the following options exist:

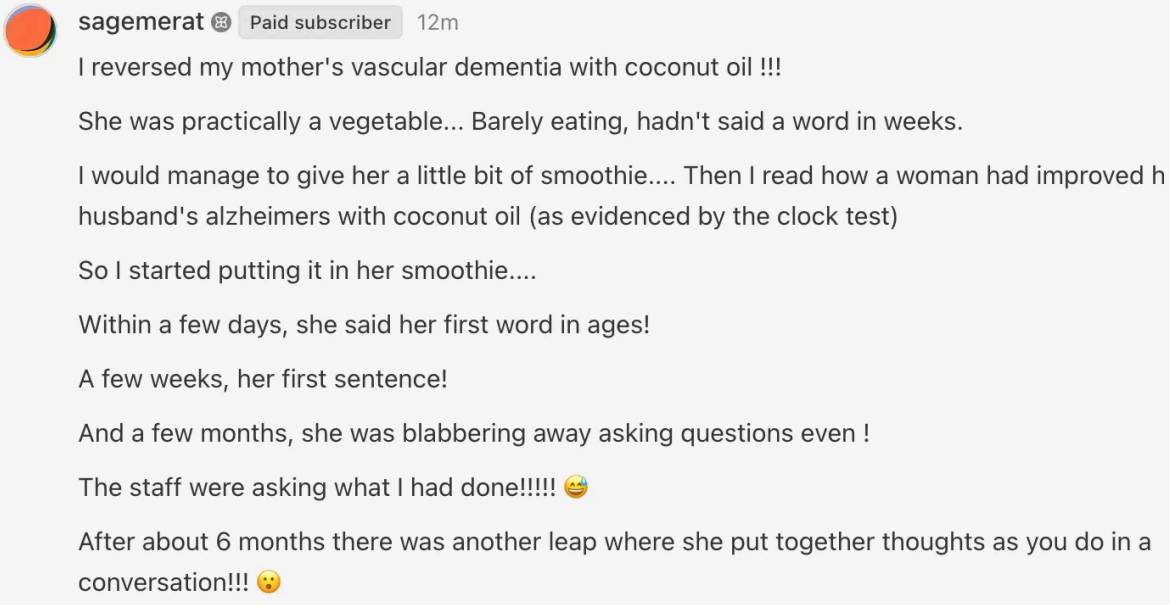
Oil	Omega-6 (g/100g)	Omega-3 (g/100g)	Omega-6:Omega-3 Ratio	Smoke Point (°F)	Price per Liter (USD)
Coconut Oil	1.8	0.0 (Trace)	N/A (High)	350 (virgin), 400 (refined)	6.50
Butter (Ghee)	2.7 (LA)	1.5 (ALA, DHA)	1.8:1	485 (ghee)	12.00
Tallow (Beef)	3.1	0.6	5.2:1	420	8.00
Palm Oil	9.1	0.2	45.5:1	450 (refined)	4.50
Olive Oil (Extra Virgin)	9.8	0.4–1.2 (avg. 0.8)	8.2:1–24.5:1 (avg. 12.3:1)	375	10.00
Lard (Pork)	10.2	1.0	10.2:1	370	7.00
Duck Fat	11.8	1.0	11.8:1 (Est.) *	375	15.00
Avocado Oil	12.5	1.0	12.5:1	520 (refined)	14.00
Macadamia Nut Oil	13.0	0.0 (Trace)	N/A (High) *	400	20.00
Perilla Oil	14.0 *	56.0 *	0.25:1 (Est.) *	370	28.00 *
-- Commonly Used Oils Below --					
Canola Oil	18.6	9.1	2.0:1	400	3.75
Peanut Oil	32.0	0.0 (Trace)	N/A (High)	450 (refined)	5.50
Sesame Oil	41.3	0.3	137.7:1	410 (untoasted)	9.00
Soybean Oil	50.4	6.8	7.4:1	450	4.00
Corn Oil	53.5	1.2	44.6:1	440	4.50
Sunflower Oil (High Linoleic)	65.7	0.2	328.5:1	440	4.50
Grapeseed Oil	69.9	0.1	699:1	420	8.00

While a case can be made for a few of these, as the chart shows, coconut oil is arguably the best option, particularly since it also has a high smoke point (which means coconut oil, particularly refined coconut oil, can be safely used for frying).

Note: another option for frying is to bypass needing a liquid with a boiling point above that of water entirely with an air fryer.

Likewise, coconut oil (when prepared correctly) can be used as a substitute for many of the common oils (e.g., canola or soybean) in around 50-60% of processed foods and I've found most of the time a coconut oil containing version of a common product (e.g., chocolate or potato chips) can be found that both tastes and feels much better than those made with standard processed oils.
Note: there are a variety of other issues with the commonly used oils to (e.g., by not being saturated they are often rancid and they frequently contain a significant number of harmful chemicals).

Lastly, there are many non-culinary uses for coconut oil. For example, people, particularly those sensitive to chemicals, often find coconut oil is an excellent lubricant, skin care or hair care product (or carrier for DMSO cosmetics), I've heard a few reports of it being an excellent tick repellant (as ticks will not go onto skin covered with coconut oil) and I've heard numerous stories over the years of Alzheimer's significantly improving from the consumption of coconut oil derived MCTs (for which which has been corroberated by a clinical trial—where it actually performed better than any of the costly therapies on the market).



Note: because there is a huge need to incentivize transitioning to healthier oils, RFK Jr. has been publicly promoting Steak and Shake's decision to transition from using vegetable oils to beef tallow so that the market inertia for this shift can begin to form.

The Great Cholesterol Scam

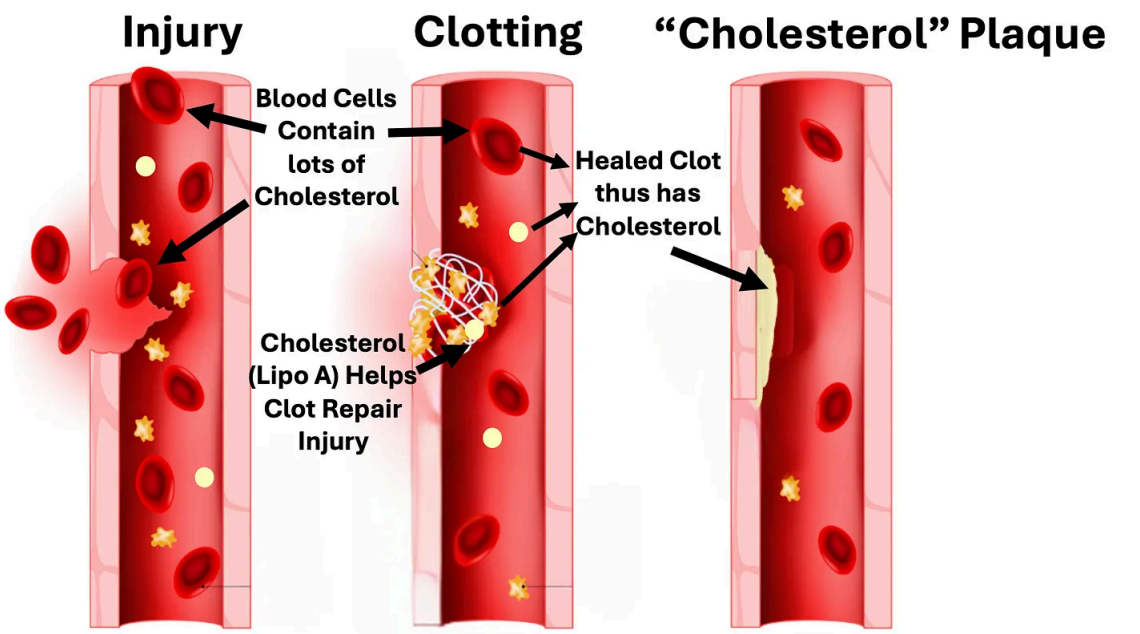
Many (myself included) believe one of the most harmful nutritional myths is the notion that saturated fats and cholesterol cause heart disease and must be avoided.

As best as I can tell, this myth originated with in the 1960s from the sugar industry paying for fabricated data that showed animal fats rather than sugar were responsible for the increase in heart disease we were seeing, after which point vegetable oil producers became invested in the mythology (since it allowed them to displace animal fats).

The medical community tried to get on the bandwagon as well, but could not for decades as no medication could reliably reduce cholesterol. However, once statins (which could reliably lower cholesterol), were discovered (with the first one hitting the market in 1987) one of the largest drug markets in history formed (now worth 25 billion dollars a year in America alone). This incentivized funding a lot of research that argued saturated fats and cholesterol were bad for you and thereby cemented this dogma throughout medicine.
*Note: A strong case can be made the primary factors responsible for the decline in heart disease we saw were removing lead from gasoline and smoking reduction (and conversely that the increase was in part due to water chlorination). However, much in the same way vaccinators took credit for modern sanitation reducing infectious disease, the cholesterol industry claimed credit for declining heart disease and now blames ongoing cases (**which remain the leading cause of death**) on too few people taking statins or blood pressure pills, rather than on the neglect of actual treatments for the conditions (much in the same way the persistence of COVID or the flu is always blamed on not enough people vaccinating).*

All of this has been quite problematic for a few different reasons.

First, the premise behind it is wrong. Cholesterol does not clog arteries, rather it is the body's way of repairing damage to the blood vessel lining.



Note: I believe the key reason this myth persists because it is easy to visualize (with disgust) arteries being clogged by thick fats in a manner equivalent to a drain pipe being clogged.

Second, the evidence used to argue cholesterol is bad for you is very weak (e.g., many studies show cholesterol does not cause heart disease), whereas multiple studies have shown lowering cholesterol or replacing saturated fats with vegetable oils greatly increases your risk of dying (e.g., many studies have found a roughly 25% increase in death).

Third, statins injure roughly 20% of users, with many experiencing severe side effects (which quickly adds up given that over a quarter of US adults take statins despite there being no evidence they extend life).
Note: the great statin scam and the forgotten ways to treat heart disease is discussed here, while a similar scam with blood pressure (and its forgotten treatments) is discussed here.

Fourth, this myth caused saturated fats to be replaced with vegetable oils (which cause many different chronic health issues).

Note: in the early 1980s, coconuts were consumed throughout Asia whereas processed vegetable oils (e.g., soy) were consumed in heavy quantities throughout India. At that time, one natural medicine pioneer (Bernard Jensen) widely promoted iridology, a diagnostic system where chronic health issues could be detected through changes in the eyes. He taught that a "scurf" ring being present around the iris correlated with fluid stagnation throughout the body

(e.g., in the circulation) and retained toxicity and argued that vaccinations and overconsumption of bad oils caused this ring (and the congestion) to develop (and likewise the pioneer of zeta potential noticed vegatable oils would cause intravascular congestion) Because of this, we paid attention to the eyes of people in place and noticed the scurf rings were vastly more common in India compared to low seed oil parts of Asia. Finally, a strong case can be made that many of the problems vaccines cause result from them creating fluid stagnation (e.g., microclots) throughout the body.

Coconut Production

Because of the media blitz against saturated fats in the 1980s, the demand for coconut oil rapidly decreased, resulting in the price of it also collapsing and many farms that had been made to produce coconuts being abandoned (we remember coconut plantations in the Philippines being burned in 1986 due to this). As such, while the production of coconut oil has slowly increased over the decades, that increase was a tiny fraction of what was seen with the cheaper vegetable oils.

This is highly unfortunate as:

•Coconuts are relatively sustainable to produce (as they do not require many of the toxic pesticides and herbicides other mass produced crops need and their husks have a variety of uses rather than simply being a waste product).

•Many tropical areas of the USA used to be economically sustained by the (environmentally destructive) production of sugarcane stopped producing it due to declining prices and farming subsidies for sugar cane. Because of this, large portions of underutilized, vacant (or never developed) farmland exist in many tropical regions of the United States and its territories. Had coconut production been implemented, it would have offered a way to revive local economies and working class jobs (whereas the trend in areas like Hawaii has instead been to build luxury housing and increase the gap between the rich and poor). Likewise, large areas of Asia were deforested to produce palm oil and now that demand is significantly dropping for it (e.g., due to environmental concerns) there is a huge opportunity to increase global coconut oil production (as those areas are also highly suitable for coconut cultivation).

•The primary reason why highly unhealthy seed oils are used in everything is because the existing subsidy system makes them incredibly cheap to produce. In contrast, were healthy oils like coconut oils to be subsidized our processed food production would not have needed to only revolve around toxic seed oils.

Note: since coconut trees take 6-10 years to begin producing coconuts, this shift would require a longterm investment (e.g., intelligent farming subsidies) to facilitate it (or over a longer term increasing consumer awareness and demand for it).

Coconut Water

In medicine, one of the most useful things hospitals can do for patients is provide them with infusions of specific blood replacement fluids, something I believe works in part due to the infusions restoring the zeta potential of the body (hence improving blood perfusion and reducing micro-clotting).

What many do not know is that coconut water is one of the only naturally occurring substances that has ever successfully been used as an IV fluid:

> Another innovative approach regarding intravenous fluid administration also appeared during World War II and renewed attention during the Vietnam War (1955–1978): due to the lack of blood products or adequate alternatives for fluid administration, American soldiers received intravenous infusions of coconut water directly through a filter from the fruit. What sounds curious at first glance might have saved the life of many wounded soldiers: coconuts were omnipresent in Vietnam and the coconut water within an intact nut is sterile.
>
> Furthermore, the composition of coconut water is compatible with human plasma, though it represents rather the intracellular cytoplasm than the extracellular fluid (low sodium and high potassium). In addition, coconut water is hyperosmolar (high glucose level) and acidic (pH 4–6), though the chemical composition depends on the age of the nut. Despite these properties, no adverse effects after the infusion of coconut water have been reported until today. Thus, coconut water is considered "a possible blood substitute for short-term application in emergency situations." Even today, the Indonesian navy keeps supplies of coconuts for medical interventions and is trained in their usage.

Furthermore, in addition to coconut water matching the composition of the plasma, and containing health-promoting antioxidant phenolics, organic acids, amino acids, and phytohormones (such as cytokinins), it also contains an electrolyte mix somewhat suited for improving zeta potential (e.g., high potassium and low sodium, along with moderate amounts of the negatively charged ions that most improve zeta potential). I believe this is one reason why people often immediately feel better after drinking good quality coconut water.

Note: In tropical and resource-limited settings, sterile young coconut water is used as a natural semen extender for artificial insemination — especially in cattle, buffalo, and pig breeding programs in India, Brazil, Southeast Asia, and parts of Africa. Its near-isotonic composition, high potassium/low sodium profile, natural sugars, mildly acidic pH, and antioxidant content preserve sperm motility and viability for 24–72 hours at room temperature (or longer when chilled) and, when combined with egg yolk and glycerol, serve as an effective cryopreservation medium (as semen needs to be diluted prior to freezing) that is still routinely used for freezing bull, buffalo, and boar semen in many developing-country labs and field stations today, often yielding pregnancy rates comparable to commercial extenders (e.g., see this study and this study where it was combined with DMSO to preserve bull semen)—again illustrating coconut water's remarkable biocompatibility with mammalian physiology. Likewise, coconut milk is sometimes used to preserve semen (e.g., one study found 5 % methanol with 6 % coconut milk was the optimal cryopreservant for koi semen).

Coconut water, in turn, is one of the most popular popular coconut products and over the years I've discovered:

•The quality of coconut water varies greatly from brand to brand (and in turn I will not drink many common brands now).
•Coconut water taken from store bought young coconuts typically tastes better than most packaged coconut water.
•Fresh coconut water from a freshly harvested coconut tastes the best.
•If that fresh coconut water (stored in a glass jar) is given a bit of time to lightly ferment in the fridge, it tastes even better, as the excessive sweetness is replaced by a powerful refreshing taste (due to a bit of bacterial fermentation).

Much of that is due to coconut water having a variety of components within them that bacteria will consume and spoil once it leaves the coconut (hence necessitating sterilization prior to packaging) and the coconuts having a variety of nourishing components that are damaged or destroyed by pasteurization.
Note: the many issues with pasteurizing dairy and why so many people seek out raw milk are discussed further here.

Coconut Options

For years I ate a mostly raw diet (which was only possible due to coconuts), and in that process, discovered there were many wonderful coconut based recipes, but also that the quality of coconut products varies immensely.

In the final part of this article (which primarily exists as an open forum for you to ask any answered questions that have come up over the last month) I will provide a preview of the upcoming DMSO neurology article, cover what my favorite uses for coconuts were (e.g., with chocolate), share the best sources I've come across for coconut products (e.g., coconut water) and note which of those had the greatest positive impact on my life.