



Taken from: [www.draxe.com/coconut-milk-nutrition](http://www.draxe.com/coconut-milk-nutrition)

With its creamy texture and slight natural sweetness, coconut milk might taste like something that *should* be bad for you, yet it's anything but. Coconut milk is often considered a “miracle liquid” since coconut milk nutrition offers great ability to build up the body's immune defenses and prevent disease. Coconut milk, along with its relatives coconut oil and coconut water are among the world's healthiest foods.

### **Health Benefits**

#### **Improves Heart Health by Lowering Blood Pressure and Cholesterol:**

Coconuts are one of the best sources of lauric acid — 50 percent of the fat in coconuts is lauric acid, which has antibacterial and antiviral activities. According to many studies, lauric acid is a protective type of fatty acid linked with improved cholesterol levels and heart health.

For example, when 60 healthy volunteers were given coconut milk porridge (CMP) for five days a week for eight weeks, researchers found that their low density lipoprotein (LDL) levels decreased while their “good” high density lipoprotein (HDL) levels rose significantly. They concluded that “coconut fat in the form of coconut milk does not cause a detrimental effect on the lipid profile in the general population, and in fact is beneficial due to the decrease in LDL and rise in HDL cholesterol.”

Because coconuts contain minerals important for circulation and controlling blood flow, coconut milk is also useful for lowering blood pressure and keeping blood vessels flexible, elastic and free from plaque buildup. For example, magnesium may help combat stress and muscle tension while aiding in circulation and keeping muscles relaxed, important for preventing heart attacks.



### **Builds Muscle and Helps Lose Fat:**

Studies find that medium-chain triglycerides (MCT) fatty acids found in coconut milk increase energy expenditure and help enhance physical performance. Following exercise, muscles also need plenty of nutrients — including electrolytes like magnesium and potassium that are found in coconut milk — to repair broken down tissue and grow back even stronger. Because coconut milk is high in healthy fats, it also helps fill you up and prevent overeating or snacking throughout the day, which derail your efforts to improve your body composition.

### **Provides Electrolytes and Prevents Fatigue:**

Although coconut water is a higher source of electrolytes, coconut milk also provides important minerals needed to maintain blood volume, regulate heart health, and prevent dehydration or diarrhea. Especially in very hot weather, following exercise or after being sick, electrolytes help prevent exhaustion, heat strokes, heart problems, muscle aches or cramps, and low immunity.

### **Brain Food:**

Coconut milk also contains the types of MCTs that are easily used by your brain for energy, without even needing to be processed through your digestive tract with bile acids like some other fats. Coconut milk's calories provide a quick and efficient source of healthy calories for the brain, which is actually primarily made up of fat and relies on a steady stream of it to function.

### **Helps Lose Weight:**

According to a study done by the School of Dietetics and Human Nutrition at McGill University...

*“Consumption of a diet rich in MCTs results in greater loss of fat (adipose tissue) compared with long-chain fatty acids, perhaps due to increased energy expenditure and fat oxidation observed with MCT intake. MCTs may be considered as agents that aid in the prevention of obesity or potentially stimulate weight loss.”*

As a food high in MCTs, coconut milk is a very filling, fat-burning food. Fats provide the feeling of being full and satisfied and can help prevent overeating, snacking, food cravings and potentially weight gain. Of course, portion control is important considering the calorie count of coconut milk, but as a part of a healthy diet it provides necessary fatty acids in addition to other minerals that support weight loss and detoxification. Coconut milk is also hydrating and helps the digestive organs, like the liver and kidneys, function properly, which helps metabolize fat and remove waste from the body.

### **Improves Digestion and Relieves Constipation:**

A well-hydrated digestive tract is important for preventing or treating constipation. Coconut milk nourishes the digestive lining due to its electrolytes and healthy fats, improving gut health and preventing conditions like IBS.

### **Manages Blood Sugar and Controls Diabetes:**

The fat content of coconut milk can help slow the rate at which sugar is released into the bloodstream, better controlling insulin levels and preventing a “sugar high” or worse, conditions like diabetes. This is one reason why coconut milk is especially good to add to sweetened recipes, like desserts. Coconut milk's MCTs are also a preferred source of energy for the body rather than sugar.



### **Helps Prevent Anemia:**

Although the iron content of coconut milk isn't very high, it still provides a good source of plant-based iron that can contribute to a diet sufficient at preventing anemia.

### **Prevents Joint Inflammation and Arthritis:**

Coconut milk's MCTs can help lower inflammation, which is associated with painful conditions like arthritis and general joint or muscle aches and pains. Coconut milk in place of refined sugar especially is helpful for people with arthritis (or other autoimmune conditions) because sugar is a pro-inflammatory and linked to low immunity, worsened pain and swelling.

### **Prevents Ulcers:**

Another benefit of coconut milk nutrition that may surprise you? Researchers found that coconut milk can help reduce the occurrence of ulcers even better than coconut water. When rats with ulcers were given coconut milk, they experienced a reduction in the size of ulcers of about 56 percent. The study found that coconut milk had protective effects on the ulcerated gastric mucus that can lead to painful ulcers.