

Dr. Mark Hyman: The Secret Fat That Makes You Thin

[Dr. Mark Hyman](#) | February 5, 2016 11:43 am | [Comments](#)



“Dr. Hyman, I’ve heard you mention MCT oil before,” writes this week’s house call. “Can you tell me more about it and the potential benefits?”

MCT stands for medium-chain triglycerides. They are a type of fatty acid that is derived from coconut oil. Consider MCT oil as a super fuel for your cells, because it boosts fat burning and increases mental clarity.

MCT can also help you lose weight because it is quickly burned and metabolized. It gets absorbed directly from the gut into the liver and doesn’t get stored as fat but rather burned quickly and turned into energy. For many patients, MCT becomes that little nudge to help you drop those last 10 to 15 stubborn pounds that just won’t go away.

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In one study published in the Journal of Obesity and Research in 2013, scientists at McGill University carried out a randomized control trial to compare the effects of medium-chain triglycerides (such as caprylic acid and lauric acid) and long-chain triglycerides (like olive oil) on body fat storage, energy expenditure, appetite control and other aspects of weight loss in overweight men.

Researchers put these men on different diets for 28 days. They switched the diets after a short time so that they could see differences in the same subjects.

One group ate a coconut oil-rich diet, high in medium-chain triglycerides. The other group ate a diet rich in long-chain triglycerides.

Researchers found the men who ate coconut oil lost more body fat, which they attributed to a greater increase in energy expenditure and fat burning. Coconut oil actually sped up their metabolism, curbing their appetite and allowing them to lose more belly fat, as compared with the men who were on the olive oil-rich diet.

MCTs are also a unique form of saturated fat with very potent antioxidant and anti-microbial properties that support your immune system. They also provide anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and even anti-viral benefits.

MCT Oil is a Fat Burning Oil

Let’s compare MCTs with omega 6 fats.

Omega 6 fats are seed, bean or grain oils (which include corn, soy, sunflower and canola oils). Once ingested, these inflammatory oils are transported to the lymphatic system and not to the blood, which means your fat tissues absorb them.

MCTs, on the other hand, are directly absorbed into the blood and boost your metabolism, burn more calories and fat and reduce fat storage, while curbing your appetite. That’s why we think of these fats as super fuel for your cells.

In fact, studies show MCTs help you burn about 460 extra calories a day for men and about 190 extra calories for women (sorry, ladies!). MCTs also beneficially impact your hormones, including appetite-controlling hormones, helping you feel full.

They can also improve your cholesterol profile. In one study, consuming MCT oils helped reduce body fat and triglycerides more than omega 6 vegetable oils. After eight weeks, the experiment showed the MCT oil group lost more weight, body fat and subcutaneous fat, all while experiencing a 15 percent drop in triglycerides and LDL (the bad) cholesterol.

All these benefits occurred despite the fact that MCTs are a saturated fat. There was no difference in daily exercise or consumption of total calories of protein, fat or carbohydrates. There was no calorie restriction, yet the subjects still lost more weight. It further proves that it's not all about the calories in food, it's about the information.

Researchers attributed this to the increased metabolism and fat burning that comes with consuming MCTs. I love coconut oil because it provides the very best natural source of MCT oils to boost metabolism, cut your hunger, lower triglycerides, reduce fat storage and even improve athletic performance. On top of all these benefits, MCTs make excellent brain and cellular fuel.

You might be hesitant to use coconut oil or MCT oil because it is high in saturated fat, which has been demonized for decades. Yet there is world of difference between quality saturated fat in coconut or MCT oils, as compared with what you might find in a fast food cheeseburger.

The recent U.S. dietary guidelines finally eliminated any call to lower dietary cholesterol and fat. The research just does not support any link to heart disease. There is no limit on total dietary fat or cholesterol—a complete reversal on governmental advice from 35 years ago.

Fat is one of your body's main building blocks, yet for decades it was unfairly maligned. Instead, we followed a low-fat diet according to U.S. dietary guidelines, which became a high-sugar, high-refined-carb diet contributing to an epidemic of insulin resistance, obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and many other serious health problems.

We know inflammation caused by following these flawed guidelines is the true villain. Rather than demonize fat, we need to restrict sugar and carbohydrates that break down to sugar, along with inflammatory omega 6 fats. Instead, we want more omega 3 fats and MCTs like coconut oil, which can help you to lose weight and become healthy and vibrant. Quality matters here, not quantity.

I personally use MCT oil every single day. I use it every morning to speed up my metabolism and keep my mind sharp and focused. It also keeps me full and satisfied longer, so it prevents me from food emergencies and snacking.

Let's take a look at just a few of the many ways you can get MCTs and healthy fats into your diet, which is the main focus of my new book, *Eat Fat, Get Thin*. Check it out:

1. Add it to your salad dressing for your different salad recipes.
2. Add it in your smoothie. You can find my favorite recipes here.
3. Enjoy it in your coffee—just like my friend Dave Asprey of Bulletproof Coffee® does. It tastes great.
4. You can also use MCT oil as a supplement and take it by the tablespoon. You can find it in my online store.
5. Use it as a base for marinades for your meat, chicken or fish.

Over the next few months in these blogs, I'm going to blow up the myths you've long heard about dietary fat and uncover real truths, which will allow you to utilize healthy fats to become lean and healthy.

In my new book, *Eat Fat, Get Thin*, I provide tons of uses for MCT oil and I dig in a bit deeper to explain why I love this beautiful fat source so much.

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