

Coconut oil could prevent tooth decay



Coconut oil is a natural antibiotic that can be incorporated into commercial dental care products, say scientists. They have found that digested coconut oil can attack the bacteria that cause tooth decay.

The team from the Athlone Institute of Technology in Ireland tested the antibacterial action of coconut oil in its natural state and coconut oil that had been treated with enzymes, in a process similar to digestion. The researchers suggest that enzyme-modified coconut oil has potential as a marketable antimicrobial, which could be of particular interest to the oral healthcare industry. Dr Damien Brady, who is leading the research, said, "Incorporating enzyme-modified coconut oil into dental hygiene products would be an attractive alternative to chemical additives, particularly as it works at relatively low concentrations. Also, with increasing antibiotic resistance, it is important that we turn our attention to new ways to combat microbial infection. Our data suggests that products of human digestion show antimicrobial activity. This could have implications for how bacteria colonise the cells lining the digestive tract and for overall gut health," explained Dr Brady.