

Top health benefits of coconut milk

Research suggests that coconut milk can promote weight loss, heart health, and immunity. Here, we look at each benefit in turn.

Weight loss

Coconut milk contains a type of fat called medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs). MCTs stimulate energy through a process called thermogenesis, or heat production.

[ResearchTrusted Source](#) suggests that MCTs might help:

- [reduceTrusted Source body weight](#) and the buildup of fat
- cause people to [feel fullTrusted Source](#) for longer after eating
- [increaseTrusted Source insulin](#) sensitivity, which may promote weight loss
- boost exercise endurance

Insulin is an essential hormone that breaks down glucose and controls blood sugar levels.

[Research from 2020Trusted Source](#) found that rats who consumed coconut milk were more likely to lose weight and visceral fat than those consuming other milk types and other diet combinations.

The results also suggest that combining coconut milk with a high protein diet could help reduce or manage levels of abdominal fat, weight gain, food intake, cholesterol, and triglycerides.

However, many factors [can affectTrusted Source](#) a person's weight, including physical activity levels and the amount of food they eat. In addition, coconut milk can be high in fat and carbohydrates, which means consuming too much may lead to weight gain.

It is of note that more research is necessary to assess how coconut milk can affect body weight.

Heart health

Some [evidence](#) suggests that lauric acid, an antioxidant present in coconut milk, may help prevent stroke and heart disease.

Some rodent [researchTrusted Source](#) also indicates that combining a high protein diet with coconut milk could help manage cholesterol levels.

However, there is not enough evidence to confirm that coconut milk is good for the heart. In addition, coconut milk [containsTrusted Source](#) the same fat as [coconut oil](#), which is mostly saturated fat. There is a [riskTrusted Source](#) that saturated fat can raise cholesterol levels.

The American Heart Association (AHA) does not encourage the use of coconut oil, as there is [evidenceTrusted Source](#) it may increase levels of LDL, or "bad," cholesterol in the body.

Antioxidant protection from disease

Coconut contains phenols, which are antioxidants.

During metabolism and other processes, the body produces waste products called reactive oxygen species, or free radicals.

Free radicals that remain in the body can cause oxidative stress, resulting in damage that may lead to various health conditions, including [cancer](#) and heart disease.

Antioxidants can help the body fight or remove free radicals, protecting it from disease.

The authors of a [2015 study](#) found that Malaysian coconut milk had higher antioxidant activity than milk from goats and cows.

[Research from 2020 Trusted Source](#) concludes that the phenolic content in coconut could help protect lipids, proteins, and DNA in the body from damage due to oxidative stress.

Antimicrobial activity fighting infection

Coconuts contain a lipid called lauric acid.

Some [findings Trusted Source](#) indicate that lauric acid has antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, suggesting they may help support the immune system.

In a [study](#) of the antimicrobial effects of lauric acid from coconuts, the researchers isolated various bacterial strains and exposed them to lauric acid in a laboratory.

They found that lauric acid effectively inhibited the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

Other [researchers Trusted Source](#) found that lauric acid triggers apoptosis, or cell death, in breast and endometrial cancer cells, suggesting it could inhibit cancer cell growth.

However, the amount of lauric acid a person is likely to consume in coconut milk is not enough to say it prevents cancer.