

Coconut oil – Nutting out the facts.

Coconut oil is the latest “it” food. The purported health benefits include weight loss and improved cholesterol profile. So what do we think of this new super food?

There is some evidence suggesting that coconut oil increases HDL (good) cholesterol . Unfortunately, it increases LDL (bad) cholesterol too. This is not surprising given that coconut oil is 90% saturated fat. In comparison, olive oil is 14% saturated fat, 73% mono unsaturated and 11% poly unsaturated. Whilst there is still debate about the affect of *saturated* fat on health, there is strong evidence that *unsaturated* fats have various health benefits including protection against heart disease. By replacing other oils with coconut oil you reduce your intake of these protective fats. Based on its negative impact on LDL cholesterol and the risk of reducing intake of unsaturated fats, we do not recommend this as a suitable alternative to other vegetable oils.

In respect to its effects on weight loss, again there is some evidence that the fat structure (medium chain triglycerides or MCTs) can have a small increase in the rate of fat loss over time. But again there is a big HOWEVER. Like all oils, coconut oil is primarily just fat. Regardless of the type of fat, all fat is very calorie dense and if consumed in excess, will lead to weight gain. No matter what effect MCTs have on fat metabolism, if you consume too much, you will gain weight.

The verdict

We recommend you use an oil rich in mono and poly unsaturated fats in your every day cooking. But like all fats, these should be used in moderation. Try using spray oil and non stick pans to minimise your total fat intake for weight control.

**this issue**

Coconut oil –
Nutting out the facts **P.1**

Feature Article: Diabetes –
The Epidemic of our Times **P.2**

Coffee and Diabetes -
New Research **P.3**

Changing Seasons

The warm weather is gone and winter is here to stay (at least for a few months). As winter approaches, don't fall into the trap of expecting and accepting the “winter spread”.

Many clients have expressed concerns about maintaining good eating habits during winter. They're concerned about heavier food in the cooler months and that the salad lunch which worked so well during summer might not hit the spot in the middle of July.

It's easy to prepare delicious, season appropriate meals all year around if you keep some basic tips in mind:

- Rolled oats are a great, warming breakfast. Try adding some cinnamon instead of sugar or honey.
- Try swapping your lunch salad for a chunky vegetable soup
- Watch your meat portions. Just because it's a casserole doesn't mean your portions need to change. Remember 100g of red meat per person.
- Ensure you have double the non starchy vegetables than starchy vegetables. Great veggies for soups, stews and casseroles include zucchini, carrot, mushrooms, eggplant, celery, parsnip, tomato and onion.

For great, seasonal, meal ideas, visit our website www.healthieryou.com.au. We will add a new recipe every week to help keep you on track and loving your food throughout winter.



Food of the month

Kanga Bangas



What is it?

Kangaroo sausages

Why we love it.

- 60% less calories than beef sausages
- 94% less saturated fat than beef sausages
- Kangaroo farming is illegal therefore Kangaroo is the ultimate free range meat and is free from human intervention, chemicals, antibiotics etc
- Kangaroo harvesting is necessary to prevent environmental damage due to kangaroo overpopulation

Where can you find it?

Meat section of most supermarkets



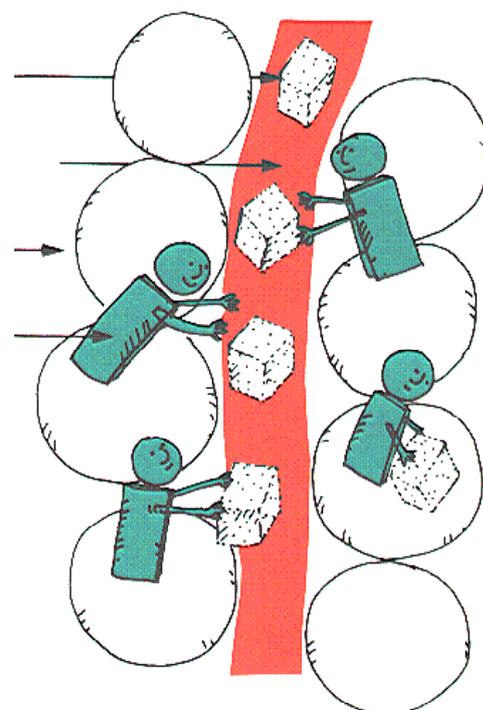
Feature article: Diabetes – The epidemic of our times

By Peter Clark

Each day in Australia, approximately 275 people are diagnosed with diabetes. Diabetes is the sixth highest cause of death by disease in Australia. People with diabetes are almost three times more likely to have high blood pressure, obesity or elevated blood fats (e.g. cholesterol, triglycerides) and two times more likely to have cardiovascular disease (e.g. heart disease and stroke).

Diabetes occurs when a hormone called insulin does not work properly. Insulin usually helps glucose (a type of sugar) move from the blood into the cells of the body. Once in the cells, glucose is used for energy. Insulin is like a key to a locked door. Glucose cannot move out of the blood and into the cells without insulin.

High blood glucose levels cause damage to the kidneys, nerves and eyes. High blood sugar levels with a high fat/high salt diet, can result in elevated cholesterol levels and high blood pressure. This can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke.



There are two types of diabetes. Type 1 is where the body stops producing insulin. People who develop this need to take lifelong injections of insulin. The far more common type of diabetes is Type II. Approximately 90-95% of people with diabetes have Type II. Type 2 diabetes can be delayed and even prevented in up to 60% of cases by adopting a healthy diet and active lifestyle (1).

There are a variety of things we can do to improve our overall health and reduced the risk of diabetes. These include:

1. Eat a wide variety of nutritious foods regularly – small amount of foods from a variety of sources gives us the full range of vitamins and minerals
2. Reduce animal or saturated fat – reducing these foods can help reduce our cholesterol levels and in turn, reduce the risk of heart disease
3. Eat an adequate amount of fibre – aim to have 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables each day
4. Choose high fibre foods most of the time – whole grain bread and high fibre cereals are more filling and can help reduce blood sugar levels
5. Cut down on sugar and salt – reducing processed foods and not adding salt and sugar to foods when prepared.
6. Drink plenty of water – aim for 6-8 glasses/day. It cleanses the liver. The liver is one of the key organs to regulate blood sugar levels
7. Do some type of regular exercise – muscles that are exercising are using sugar and this helps reduce your overall blood sugar levels.

Importantly, ½ people with diabetes are unaware they have it. And if left untreated, will probably get worse. If you are tired all the time and have gained weight, particularly around the abdomen, you may be at risk of developing diabetes. Particularly if there is a family history of diabetes. A simple blood test will answer the question, and perhaps, set you on the road to a healthier you.

EYE ON IT

Current Nutrition Trends

Coffee and diabetes

A recent study following over 100 000 people has found that coffee can help reduce the risk of diabetes.

The findings

Increasing coffee intake by 1 cup per day reduced the risk of diabetes by 11% in a 4 year follow up.

The mechanism

It is thought that misfolding human islet amyloid polypeptide (hIAPP) may be associated with type 2 diabetes. Compounds found in coffee have been shown to inhibit this process which may explain the positive impact on diabetes risk.

The negatives

Excessive coffee intake can lead to agitation, increased blood pressure, sleep disturbance, stomach upset and diarrhoea.

Our view

Consuming a moderate amount of coffee (3 cups a day) can be beneficial as part of a balanced diet. Ensure your coffee is based on water not milk to avoid excessive caloric intake. Try drinking coffee in the morning to avoid sleep disturbance. If you experience any side effects, reduce your intake immediately.

Semi dried tomato, spinach and ricotta fritters

Ingredients

- 1 large bunch English spinach
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 2 eggs
- 250g low-fat ricotta
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1/2 cup chopped semi-dried tomatoes (drained)
- 1/3 cup kalamata olives, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped basil
- 4 cups baby spinach leaves, to serve
- 4 Roma tomatoes, roasted, to serve



1. Blanch spinach for 30 seconds. Plunge into a bowl of cold water. Squeeze out excess water and finely chop.
2. Whisk together milk, eggs and ricotta. Gradually whisk in flour until smooth. Stir in spinach, semi-dried tomatoes, olives and basil.
3. Heat a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Spoon 1/4 cup of mixture per fritter into the pan. Cook for 3 minutes each side, until golden. Makes 12 fritters.
4. Serve with spinach and tomatoes.



Supermarket tours.

Supermarket aisles can be a confusing and intimidating place. This year, Healthier You will be running fortnightly supermarket tours to help you plan your shopping, improve your label reading skills, and outwit the cunning, marketing tricks.

The tours will involve a brief introduction and label reading overview, a wander through the supermarket looking at and comparing different products and a healthy morning tea to finish things off.

Upcoming Events

• Supermarket tour

Who: First in, first served. We will take *8 people* per group. Speak to reception to book your spot.

Where: Meet at *59 Lake Rd* Port Macquarie.

When: Next tour is 27th June at 10am-12 noon. Tours are run every 4 weeks.

Cost: \$20 per person

• Peter's next radio interview

Where: Tune into ABC local radio 92.3FM

When: 23th June at 10.30am

Peter does an interview every 3rd Wednesday of each month at 10.30am

• Q and A

In future editions of our newsletter, we will include a Q&A section. If you have any questions about food, nutrition and health, email us at admin@healthieryou.net.au.



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