

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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July 26, 2012

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PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776
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We're all hoping, some desperately hoping, for a cure or a good prevention for Alzheimer's Disease, or AD. One new book on the market claims that all you need is nuts, coconuts to be specific. The book claims that coconut oil will do what all the medical research so far has not been able to do - cure Alzheimer's. How we could all wish it were true!

Coconuts, coconut water and coconut oil have all been the targets of massive advertising claims recently. Just walk down the water aisle of your local grocery store and you'll see at least 6 feet of shelving full of coconut water. Light, clean and refreshing, it has some sugar, minerals and more taste than plain water. Bottles of coconut oil now sit beside the olive and safflower oil in the salad dressing section. Coconut macaroons in the bakery and coconut-filled chocolates tempt us from beside the cash register. But how could they translate into curing dementia or fixing our brains?

The theory is based on the type of fat in coconut oil. Coconut oil is not easily stored as fat in our bodies. Instead a lot of it is used by the liver to make things called ketones. Our brain can use ketones in place of glucose to keep functioning. As brain cells are affected with AD one of the problems they have is getting enough glucose in to keep them alive. So theoretically, if they can get ketones instead of sugar they might be able to function longer.

As with so many other 'miracle' cures, the theory is better than the reality. Yes,

there has been research. But it's been done in test tubes, in computers, or in lab rats. None of them work the way a human brain works. And even worse, while the research has been on ketones, it has not been done with coconut oil. The Alzheimer's Association says that there has never been any clinical testing of coconut oil, and there's no evidence that it could help either prevent or cure the disease.

The fact that AD is not the same in every person makes it harder to study. Some people show symptoms very rapidly. In others it develops very slowly. Other people seem to get worse then better then worse again. It's a very rough disease to live with or to study. So if a person here or there says they're better because they ate coconut oil, Xyz berry, Abc vegetable or anything else, it is very hard to prove or disprove the cause.

Because the fat in coconut oil is not easily stored there are also claims, theories and books advising us to use coconut to lose weight. Again, there's a lot more theory than proof there. It takes us longer to change coconut oil into something our body cells can use, and we burn a couple more calories doing that. But the difference is not enough that you'd be able to measure in your waistline anytime this century.

If you like coconut oil and can afford it by the bottle, go ahead and use it. Too much will have you running to the bathroom and feeling otherwise uncomfortable. With 115 calories per tablespoon, too much too long will definitely put some extra pounds on you just like any other oil or fat. It is very unlikely to help your brain or memory. It won't find your lost car keys, but it is not likely to hurt you.

If you're not ready for coconut crusted shrimp, and coconut on fruit salad gets in your teeth, here's a coconut pie for dessert. It is super easy, because you don't need to make or buy a pie crust. The batter does that for you while it bakes. Just be sure to

serve this with a big salad and plenty of veggies for the meal. Then you'll be able to afford the extra calories of pie.

Crazy Coconut Pie

½ cup all purpose flour

1 cup sugar

½ tsp cream of tartar

½ cup (1 stick) margarine, melted

¼ tsp baking soda

4 eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

2 cups milk

1 ½ cups shredded coconut

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 10 inch pie plate. Sift the flour, cream of tartar and baking soda together. In a larger bowl beat the eggs until blended. Add the flour mixture and all the other ingredients. Beat until blended and no dry lumps remain. Pour into pie plate and bake for 45 minutes, or until a clean knife inserted in the center comes out clean. If the pie plate is very full you might want to set in on a cookie sheet before you put it in the oven. Allow to cool before cutting. Serves 8.