



# hanover healthfoods

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**£6.50 Coconut oil is just one of many great offers on this month, including a Fish Oil BOGOF and Pukka teas at £1.99...**

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## Go Coconuts



It would appear that there's nothing you can't do with a coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera*). The trunks help to build houses, the husk is used for ropes, mats and sacks and the mid ribs of the leaves are made into brooms in India. In Sanskrit the name for a coconut palm is *kalpak visa* ('the tree which provides all the necessities of life'). Even octopi make use of coconut shells found on the sea floor to build themselves shelters or walls of defence.

The edible parts of the coconut are what we sell: coconut water, oil or butter, flour and sugar, and they are no less useful.

**Coconut oil or butter** This is probably the most exciting coconut product having nutritional, health and beauty uses. Recent media attention on coconut oil has been on it's supposed benefits for improving cognition in Alzheimer's patients. The theory is that coconut oil can yield an easy energy source for the brain and there have been some instances of improvement for some individuals. Research on coconut oil and cognitive function is still at the very beginning of its journey so we would recommend that if it is used that it is in conjunction with the best prevailing medical advice, and with supplements of B6, B12 and Folic Acid.

Coconut oil provides a rich source of MCTs (medium-chain triglycerides) which we use to make the energy store glycogen as well as ketones. Our bodies find these easier to metabolise and gain energy from than long-chain saturated animal fats. Their short length makes them more soluble so they require less bile salts for digestion and the beauty is that they are not stored as fat deposits but are used for energy. Trials have shown that using virgin coconut oil (VCO) in the diet can actually lead to a loss of fat stores, as well as aiding normal thyroid function. And for those with high cholesterol fears, VCO contains a higher amount of polyphenols than non-virgin coconut oil, and these are capable of preventing LDL (bad cholesterol) oxidation as well as reducing overall cholesterol levels. They do raise HDL, the cholesterol that you do need.

Coconut oil MCTs contains substances called caprylates which are potent anti-fungal agents and regular consumption can form part of an anti-candida diet, along with oregano and cinnamon.

Coconut oil is available to buy with or without the original coconut aroma but I find the flavour subtle enough to fry an egg or make a cake with. They contain no EFAs (essential fatty acids) so it's still important to supplement with fish or flax oil. Coconut is a saturated fat, despite all of it's health benefits, but at least this makes it a stable oil to bake and fry with. It can be taken off the spoon but also added to food and smoothies.

It can also be used externally as a hand, body and hair lotion. Coconut oil has been shown to help significantly  
*(continued overleaf)*

## DEFINING: Cherry Juice

Montmorency cherry juice, sold under the brand name Cherry Active, has been one of the most interesting products that we have sold in the last ten years. Montmorency cherry (*Prunus cerasus*) is type of sour cherry which is grown widely in North America where they have a particular taste for them.

Over the last fifteen years there has been a lot of research into the benefits of cherry juice at universities on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact much more than we can cover here but I will give a bit of a flavour...

Cherries are a rich source of bio-active pigments called anthocyanins which have an antioxidant effect as well as other effects. Anthocyanins 1 and 2 also block COX-1 and -2 which are enzymes which accelerate inflammation in the body. They have also been found to include an enzyme called SOD (Super Oxide Dismutase) which is anti-inflammatory, ellagic acid, and, very significantly, the sleepy hormone Melatonin.

Anyway, enough of the chemistry lesson. You are probably wondering what this stuff can actually do for you! Researchers at the University of Texas back in 2001 were able to speculate that the relatively high levels of Melatonin would be able to restore the circadian rhythms of people whose sleep was out of kilter due to stress, shift-working, jet lag and maybe conditions like ME. Certainly the levels in cherry juice are actually higher than found in human blood and a number of customers have actually reported that it does help sleep, even if that's not why they were originally

taking it. Most people who take Cherry Active do so for joint issues, particularly ones where a build-up of uric acid is implicated, like gout. Cherries have been used in Europe for centuries as a remedy for gout. However, its anti-inflammatory benefits seem more general than that.

One of the more high profile groups using cherry juice are athletes who use it to reduce lactic acid during training and generally to reduce post-exercise soreness and to speed recovery. Famously the British Olympic cycling team used it at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Obviously it did them no harm at all!

Cherry Active has the great advantage of tasting fantastic. It can be mixed with water and taken as a drink. It also comes in capsules.



### Goji and Pumpkin Seed Energy Bombs

3 handfuls goji berries  
3 handfuls pumpkin seeds  
2 heaped tablespoons raw virgin coconut oil

Soften the coconut oil in a bowl over hot water. Blend or chop the berries and seeds until coarse. Combine with the warmed coconut oil. Allow to cool a little then roll into balls and refrigerate. A simple, nutritious and sustaining snack!

as a skin conditioner, being rich in antioxidants and fatty acids that penetrate into the underlying tissues, helping to relieve dryness. Skin rashes also improve, and I have found it particularly helpful as a hand cream in the winter to heal skin from cold weather rashes and even open sores.

**Coconut water** is the liquid that comes out of the middle of a coconut when you break it. In recent years it has become the natural athlete's electrolyte replacement drink. It contains sodium, potassium and small amounts of sugars and Vitamin C which makes it a great isotonic electrolyte to replenish the body's water and mineral levels after dehydration, caused by exercise, too much booze or an unfortunate bout of vomiting and diarrhoea. A 250ml serving of coconut water contains more potassium than a banana!

**Coconut palm sugar** has a rich butterscotch flavour with a low melt point and is gaining popularity fast. Made from the liquid nectar of the coconut blossom, coconut palm sugar claims to be a low GI sweetener with a glycaemic index of 35, compared to cane or beet sugar which is typically GI 68. Coconut sugar is 75% sucrose with a rich supply of minerals and B vitamins without being filtered, processed or bleached.

**Coconut flour** is a natural by-product of coconut milk production. It has a historical use in malnutrition programmes used in a 5% ratio to replace wheat and non-fat dried milk powder in baking. Today it is useful for gluten-free and high protein diets. It contains more protein and fibre than most flours with a low carbohydrate content.