



Nutrition CLINIC

PRACTICAL EXPERT ADVICE FOR YOUR HEALTH AND DIET DILEMMAS

Q Should I use olive oil or coconut oil?

Eva says: "Both olive oil and coconut oil are excellent to have in your pantry. They both have a similar macronutrient breakdown, with one tablespoon of each containing 14 grams of fat and 120 calories. Which one you choose to use should depend on how you are cooking.



"Oils break down at a certain temperature, which is known as their smoke point. While exact figures vary, it is thought that the average smoke point for olive oil is 160C and 177C for coconut oil - this may be a more suitable selection for cooking at higher temperatures. Coconut oil solidifies quickly and has a sweet taste, so also works really well in dessert recipes."

Q What is the truth about heart healthy superfoods?

Victoria says: "Although the term is used widely in the press and on the internet for a whole range of foods, the reality is that there are no single foods that will make up for a generally unhealthy diet.

"Many of the examples that are being talked about as superfoods are nutritious options, such as kale, pomegranates and avocados, but there is no proof that we should be eating certain fruits and vegetables over others. By eating a variety, you'll get a wider range of nutrients and compounds that are beneficial to your health.

"Other superfoods might not be as healthy as their marketing makes them sound. Don't get carried away with the hype and always check the overall nutritional content. Flavanols in chocolate or polyphenols in extra virgin coconut oil are often talked about, masking the high saturated fat and calorie content that also comes with these foods.

"While it may not sound as exciting as opting for the latest superfoods, choosing a balanced diet from all of the major food groups, in the right proportions, will give you all the nutrients you need for good health."

Q Are probiotics beneficial?

Stacey says: "Evidence suggests that the consumption of probiotics may have beneficial biological effects on the gut, immune system and beyond by influencing the growth and activity of bacteria residing in the human gut. Dietary guidelines in some countries specifically recommend the consumption of probiotics, but the use of the word 'probiotic' to describe products for sale in the EU has been banned. The term is classed as a 'generic descriptor' which could imply an effect on health, and no specific health claims have been permitted by the European Food Safety Authority in relation to any probiotics.

"As well as effects on specific clinical conditions, such as in the treatment of a condition called pouchitis, there is some evidence from randomised controlled trials that certain probiotic strains may be effective in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhoea and reducing the duration of a cold. Dairy foods such as yoghurt, milk and cheese provide probiotics and are an important part of a healthy, balanced diet. They also provide essential nutrients such as protein, calcium and iodine, but choose lower fat and lower sugar options where possible. Probiotics appear to be safe for individuals with a healthy immune system and therefore may be a beneficial addition to a healthy diet for these people."

30-second summary: