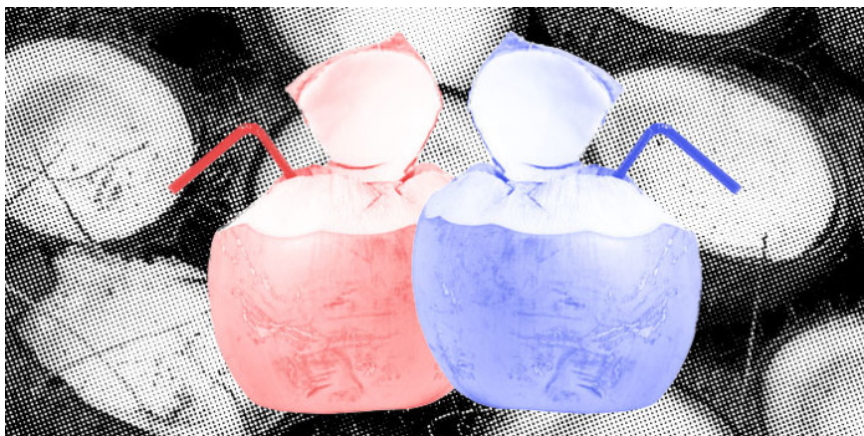


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Are The Health Benefits Of Coconut Water A Myth?

The Truth Isn't Pretty

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Coconut water is delicious, but does it deserve all the health hype it's received these past few years? One too many people have insisted to me anecdotally that the benefits of coconut water only exist when it's poured fresh out of the coconut (it's sourced from the center of the fruit), which left me both disappointed and curious. After all, it's so refreshing that it

practically *tastes* like health in a bottle! Is it really too good to be true? To solve the mystery, I called in the help of **expert Franci Cohen, a personal trainer, exercise physiologist, and certified nutritionist with a double master's degree in nutrition and exercise physiology.** Here's the hard truth — brace yourself!

It is good for your muscles.

"As a sports enhancing drink, it's touted as a high potassium and magnesium drink, and is an easily digested carbohydrate (sugar and electrolytes), with less sodium and calories than conventional sports drinks. Some athletes swear that the presence of the potassium and magnesium actually prevent muscle cramping for them."

It's not all that nutritious.

"High in vitamins? Definitely not. Read the label of any coconut water, and the nutrient content relative to the daily-recommended allowances for American adults is slim to none. The same goes for the claim that coconut water is high in amino acids — it just isn't."

So, is it only beneficial if it's fresh?

"Well, fresh is definitely better, and here's why:

- 1) Packaged coconut water is always higher in sugar than fresh
- 2) Packaged is always pasteurized

Here's why: once a coconut is cracked open, it begins to oxidize and becomes vulnerable to bacteria. The pasteurization process removes the bacteria, but unfortunately the nutrients and electrolytes get killed off during the process as well. Some packaged coconut water companies write the nutrient content *before* pasteurization, which is in turn false and misleading to the

public, whereas others (depending on the country and the guidelines set forth in each) have more stringent guidelines with food labels.

I've seen too many cases of products falling through the cracks of legal loopholes in order to escape FDA guidelines, and it's quite unfortunate, because many consumers aren't educated, and fall prey to making good purchases for their families based on misleading nutrition labels."

This doesn't mean we need to stop drinking it!

"Bottom line? If you like a little taste while working out, and water is just too blah but you don't want the high caloric and sugar content of sports drinks, then coconut water is a good choice. Don't expect it to work magic or replace your nutrient requirements for the day though, as pasteurized packaged varieties really do not offer much."