News Release
For Immediate Release

Coconut Oil and Alzheimer’s Disease

Alzheimer’s disease is an incurable form of dementia that affects an estimated 5 million people in the US. It is not part of the normal aging process, many developing early onset cases. Alzheimer’s is a progressive disease—problems with memory, thinking, and behavior worsening over time. While some people with Alzheimer’s disease can live more than a decade after diagnosis, life expectancy is usually 7 years after onset of noticeable symptoms. No current cure or treatment to stop the progression of Alzheimer’s disease has been discovered. However, some treatments are available to slow the worsening of dementia symptoms and improve quality of life of patients and their caregivers.

Coconut oil has recently been reported as a treatment for Alzheimer’s disease. The theory behind this claim is that regions of the brain affected by Alzheimer’s disease have lower rates of glucose metabolism. Processing coconut oil provides caprylic acid, a medium-chain triglyceride, which the body breaks down into substances called “ketone bodies.” These ketone bodies may provide an alternate energy source for the brain. Although, this is a novel idea, there is no research supports the claim.

Although some alternative therapies or remedies, such as coconut oil, may be potential candidates for treatments, concerns exist about using these therapies. First, the effectiveness and safety are unknown. For the approval of prescription drugs, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires rigorous scientific research to be performed. These same standards are not required of dietary supplements to make a claim. Secondly, the purity is unknown. Again, the FDA has no authority over supplement production and it is the manufacturer’s responsibility to develop and enforce its own guidelines. Additionally, manufacturers of supplements are not required to report any problems, bad reactions or side effects from taking their product to the FDA. Although, the FDA does have voluntary channels for manufacturers, consumers, and health professionals to report concerns. Finally, dietary supplements can have serious interaction with other prescribed medications. Supplements should not be taken without first consulting your physician and pharmacist.

Contact ______________________, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service ______________ County agent at ______________________, for more information.

Resources:

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