

# COCONUT OIL PURE POISON?

Harvard professor claims it is one of the worst things to eat due to its high saturated fat

## KITCHEN KILLER

LONDON: Arsenic and Mercury are known as poisonous elements. The bite of a cobra can also kill one. But one common kitchen ingredient has been claimed to be 'pure poison'.

A Harvard nutrition professor's lecture has ignited a whole new debate over coconut oil.

Karin Michels, an epidemiologist at the varsity's TH Chan school of public health, slammed the superfood movement and singled out coconut oil in particular, calling the substance "one of the worst things you can eat".

In her lecture at the University of Freiburg, she called the health claims surrounding coconut oil "absolute nonsense" and says it's "pure poison" for its saturated fat content and its threat to cardiovascular health.

The video of her lecture has amassed close to a million views and counting. The speech, delivered in German, has now been watched



nearly a million times on YouTube.

Coconut oil is about 82 per cent saturated fat, according to the American Heart Association (AHA).

A 2017 report by the AHA said that replacing saturated fats with

unsaturated fats, like the kind found in olive oil and other vegetable oils, reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease by around 30 per cent, as found in randomised control trials (in which people are randomly assigned one type of fat in

their diet versus another).

The Harvard professor based her warning on the high proportion of saturated fat in coconut oil — known to raise levels of LDL cholesterol and also the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Coconut oil contains more than 80 per cent saturated fat, more than twice the amount found in lard and 60 per cent more than is found in beef dripping. AHA recommends that people keep their daily calories from saturated fats at 5 per cent to 6 per cent of their daily calories.

In a 2,000-calorie diet, that's about 13 grammes of saturated fat per day. A tablespoon (15 millilitres) of coconut oil provides 11 grammes of saturated fat.

According to the market research firm Spins, coconut oil sales appear to have peaked in 2015 at \$229m, in the US. Many of the health claims surrounding coconut oil rely on animal studies or research not intended to test the stuff as a part of the human diet.