

*Webinar 2 Handout:*  
**UNCONVENTIONAL FATS**

I think it's safe to say the fat-free movement is finally over (yay!). We're on the other end of the spectrum these days with people embracing full fat dairy, spooning butter into their morning brew and keeping a jar of coconut butter where the tub of margarine used to sit. I promise that fat doesn't make you fat, but there are a few things to keep in mind before you give your clients liberty to go wild with butter and oil. Here are some fat fascinations you need to know about, what they can do for health, and how to guide your clients in making the best decisions with fat.

**Avocado oil** is loaded with heart healthy fats, in particular, oleic acid, a type of monounsaturated fat, linked to reducing inflammation and fighting cancer and heart disease. Studies have shown this oil packs serious antioxidant power and there's evidence that it helps to fight periodontal disease, arthritis, diabetes and psoriasis. Research has found that avocado oil helps you absorb carotenoids in foods you eat, like the salad you had for lunch. It's mild in flavor and delicious in salads, marinades and dressings. Give it a go if you're feeling been there, done that with olive oil based dressings and remember, its high tolerance for heat makes it stovetop worthy too. A little warning: it's more expensive than most oils, so stick to buying small bottles. You'll use them up before they have a chance to go bad.

**Chia seeds** are ridiculously high in fiber, omega-3s (about 5 grams of ALA in a 1½ tablespoon or ½ oz serving which is more than enough for the day), protein, calcium, manganese, magnesium and phosphorus. There is virtually no carbohydrate in these versatile, black, tinier-than-sesame-seed powerhouses, because most of the carbs in them are in the form of indigestible fiber. Chia is linked to heart health, bone health, blood sugar control and exercise performance. Add a spoonful of chia into smoothies, baked goods, cereal, yogurt or just about anything that sounds good to you. Research shows you get the most out of these puppies when they are ground or milled. Don't consume chia by the spoonful, as it poses health risks if not incorporated in liquid or foods. The tiny dry seeds swell when hydrated and form a slimy coating, so dry chia by the spoonful can get lodged in the throat. Still, this is one fat that I embrace wholeheartedly and love recommending.

**Coconut oil/coconut butter** got a bum rap back in the day, despite the fact that cultures that eat the most coconut are among the healthiest we know. In the 90's it was branded super unhealthy and we were warned to avoid it due to saturated fat. Yes, coconut oil is about 90% saturated fat, but the story doesn't end there. Coconut oil has a high percentage of medium chain fatty acids (MCTs), primarily one called lauric acid. MCTs don't raise cholesterol the way other saturated fats do; they are directly absorbed from the intestine and sent straight to the liver to be used for energy. Research links MCTs to lower weight, controlled appetite, improved immunity, increased energy, improved blood lipids profiles and decreased risk of heart disease. Coconut research also points to skin and hair benefits, I recommend coconut oil for clients with a family or personal history of brain disorders, such as epilepsy, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease because there is such good research on medium chain fatty acids and brain health.

You can replace anything you might spread butter on with coconut oil: potatoes, toast, roasted vegetables and things you might fry, like eggs. It does have a slight coconut flavor and smell, which not everyone cares for, but you will learn to love it if you eat it enough. It does help to add a shake of cinnamon!

As coconut oil and products gain more and more popularity, take note that this is one healthy food that you can certainly go overboard on. Remember proper portions: about two teaspoons is all you need.

FYI, the difference between coconut oil and coconut butter is that the oil version is made by extracting just the oil from the meat of the coconut, whereas the butter version is actually the meat and the water of the coconut blended up to make a spread (yes, there's fiber and body to it, so it won't liquefy when heated). When you buy coconut oil, buy the cold pressed, virgin, unrefined version (virgin is the least refined, though the term is not as tightly regulated with coconut oil as it is for olive oil), as it has not been exposed to excessive temperatures that cause the fat to become unstable and lose nutrient benefits. It should be solid at room temp; liquid means it's been super processed.

**Fat in coffee** is an experience I was curious to try and even willing to consider as an option for breakfast-resistant clients. I did the research. Bottom line, it gets a thumbs down from me, but I'll tell you what I learned. First, it's not so disgusting, in taste nor in concept, but I don't believe in tossing a bunch of saturated fat (and MCT oil if you're doing the original version of Bulletproof which helped make this idea popular) into your morning coffee. There are plenty of other ways to incorporate healthy fats into your daily diet and I'd much rather have someone focus on using fats along with whole plant foods (think cooking veggies in healthy oils) than just dumping into coffee. I

will tell you this: while I was learning about fat in coffee, I tried the popular idea of putting a teaspoon of coconut oil in my coffee, tea, and kids' cocoa (in lieu of the 3 to 4 tablespoons combined with grass fed butter and Brain Octain oil found in Bulletproof, which is a lot of fat for anyone). A fat-loaded coffee will never replace a solid breakfast and probably isn't necessary for clients who get enough fat during the day, but this modified dose may be appropriate for some and could benefit clients who require additional fat.

**Flax meal** is a guru ingredient in my book. Flax seeds are ground to the consistency of a coarse flour making them easy to spoon into baked goods or sprinkle on just about anything. A powerhouse of fiber, protein, and omega-3 fatty acids (the ALA kind), flax is helpful for digestion, vision, and fighting inflammation. It's a great food for cardiovascular health and cancer prevention, partly thanks to lignans, a type of phytoestrogen found in flax. Of note, there is a small estrogenic effect in flax due to the lignans, which are phytoestrogens. Research shows this might have an anti-cancer effect, and flax is on the American Institute for Cancer Research's Foods that Fight Cancer list. Remember to use the flax meal, not whole flax seeds or flax oil, which don't have nearly the benefit. Also, flax meal should be stored in the fridge, because like most omega-3 rich foods, it will go bad quickly and is sensitive to temperature and air.

**Grass fed butter**, like grass fed beef, epitomizes the 'you are what you eat' sentiment in my book. Cows that graze on a diet of grass (which is what nature intended cows to eat) make milk and dairy products such as butter that has a higher concentration of nutrition. It's loaded with vitamin K2 (menaquinone), which is critical to both bone and cardiovascular health, and butyrate (butyric acid), a short chain fatty acid that can help fight inflammation. Grass fed butter also comes with high levels of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which is linked to reducing body fat, protecting against cardiovascular diseases and cancer, aiding immune and inflammatory responses and improving bone mass. Conventional butter doesn't offer these benefits. While I'm not going to recommend eating any butter by the stick, I absolutely recommend grass fed butter over the regular stuff, margarine or any butter alternative out there and as your fat source in portion control where appropriate. When people visit Europe and rave about the butter, it's because grass fed dairy really is superior to anything else. Use grass fed butter to fry eggs or saute vegetables.

**Ghee** is a form of clarified butter. It's made by boiling regular butter to separate the protein particles (milk solids) from the liquid fat. The proteins are then skimmed or strained away. This is clarified butter. With ghee you continue to boil until the butter is caramelized and then strained again. Ghee is a more pure butter and requires no refrigeration because it doesn't spoil. It's richer in vitamins A, D, and E than regular butter and contains twice the amount of medium and short chain fatty acids. Ghee is an ancient ingredient used in India and found in Ayurvedic practices with claims that it helps improve joint health and internal lubrication. Research has found people who ate higher amounts of ghee had a lower occurrence of coronary heart disease, lower LDL cholesterol, improvements in psoriasis, and enhancement in memory. This is no "health" food to eat by the bowlful--it's still butter and a little healthy fat goes a long way. Encourage clients to try ghee for high-heat cooking (think stir-fry) or to add a little flavor and fat to steamed veggies. I especially recommend it for severely lactose intolerant clients because the lactose is removed when the milk solids are strained away. It's also great for cooking dishes where butter is center stage, because it definitely does taste special in a better-than-regular-butter sort of way.

**Hemp** is a great fat to know about because it has all of the essential amino acids in a vegan and gluten free little seed. It's protective for your heart and brain, thanks to the omega-3s packed into these mild tasting, smaller than sesame seed little gems. They're also loaded with protein and minerals including iron, zinc, magnesium, potassium and phosphorus. Hulled hemp (hemp hearts) offers about one gram of fiber per tablespoon. Hemp in the shell (whole seeds) offers way more fiber, but we don't typically see hemp like this in stores. Worried that you'll fail your drug test if you sprinkle a little hemp on your salad, yogurt or oatmeal? Worry not. The delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in marijuana is not abundant in hemp seeds; they're different species of the plant, and while THC concentrates in the leaves, it's pretty non-existent in the seeds.

Besides being delish, fat is uber important for health and wellness. Like just about all foods, there is a spectrum of crummy fats (think processed, refined, fried and hydrogenated) and nutrient powerhouse fats like many mentioned above. Lumping all fats in the same category is a huge mistake, but I still remind all to be mindful of serving sizes and portions of all fats--even the great ones. A little healthy fat goes a long way, but too much can work against you in attaining or maintaining your healthy weight goals.