

American Heart Association – an industry response

Coconut oil has been adversely affected by the current dietary guidelines that advocate a lowering of total fat and the replacement of saturated fat with polyunsaturated fat. This recommendation has its origins in the saturated fat-cholesterol-heart disease hypothesis that Ancel Keys first proposed in 1957. This hypothesis became an official recommendation with the publication of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in 1980 and has been adopted by many other countries and international agencies. The dietary recommendations include a warning against coconut oil. Recently, the American Heart Association re-issued this warning in its 2017 Presidential Advisory. However, a critical review of the experiments that Keys conducted has revealed experimental errors and biases that cast serious doubt on the validity of his hypothesis and the warnings against coconut oil. Further, the recommendation to decrease saturated fat effectively means an increase in unsaturated fat in the diet. The actual result has been an increase in omega-6 fats and a high omega-6 to omega-3 fat ratio. This unhealthy ratio has been linked to heart disease, the very disease that the AHA wants to target, as well as cancer and inflammatory diseases. Defective experiments have led to defective guidelines.



The Asian Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) is working with the coconut industry to provide evidence-based arguments to counteract the misleading information presented in *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. This builds on efforts to address similar issues in World Health Organization (WHO) Healthy Diet Fact Sheet No. 394 that wrongfully discourages the use of coconut oil. APCC has requested WHO to immediately withdraw and correct the misstatement.

Efforts are required at all levels to combat this misinformation, and the coconut industry is urged to take this important issue up with governments. APCC has developed a series of three statements that can serve as valuable sources of information in your advocacy efforts. These statements can be accessed <https://www.apccsec.org/apccsec/currentissues-4.html>