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(Review Article)

HEALTH BENEFITS OF TENDER COCONUT WATER (TCW) Siti Thomas Zulaikhah Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, UNISSULA, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This review summarizes the health benefits of Tender Coconut Water (TCW). TCW is a natural, healthy, nutritious drink from coconut tree widely grown in tropical countries. Indonesia is the larger country with the largest coconut growing country in the world. The active compounds in TCW include methionine, L-arginine, cytokines, selenium, vitamin C, and Zn, Mn and Cu. L-arginine is present in TCW Significantly reduce the free radical generation, TCW Also contain vitamin C that Significantly reduce lipid peroxidation when Introduced in rats. Larginine was able to increase glutathione peroxidase (GPx) activity in rat exposed to Plumbum. Cytokinin is a potent antioxidant against free radical-induced cell damage. Selenium is one of the micronutrients that form the enzyme GPx. Methionine is an amino acid containing sulfur that can be used as a source of thiols and plays a role in the synthesis of glutathione. The TCW of 5-7 months of age is about 500-750 mL; depending on the maturity and varieties of coconut. The older the less water the coconut. it contains

INTRODUCTION: Foods containing natural antioxidants can be used as a strategy to reduce morbidity and mortality especially due to oxidative stress ¹ and the prevalence of degenerative diseases.² Coconut water is a natural, healthy, nutritious drink from coconut palm trees widely grown in tropical countries. Indonesia is the largest coconut growing country in the world.³ TCW has a therapeutic effect,^{4,5} containing various nutrients such as minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, amino acids, enzymes and growth hormones.⁶ Recent studies have shown that TCW is rich in L-arginine, a free form amino acid, and vitamin C, which can prevent heart disease and lipid peroxidation.^{4.7} In addition, TCW also contains various important compounds for the body, such as magnesium, potassium, calcium, selenium, methionine, zinc, iodine, manganese, boron, molybdenum and phytohormon such as auxin, cytokines, gibberellins.^{4,8} L-arginine can be used for the therapy and reduce the effects of heavy metal poisoning.9 Treatment with L-arginine was able to increase GPx activity in mice exposed to Plumbum (Pb).¹⁰ Cytokinin is a potent antioxidant against free radical induced cell damage.8 Selenium is one of the micronutrients that form the GPx enzyme. Methionine is an amino acid containing International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research

sulfur that can be used as a source of thiols and plays a role in the synthesis of glutathione. Water content in a tender coconut of 5-7 months of age is about 500-750 mL, and depends on the maturity and varieties of coconut.^{11,12}

The finding of Bhagya *et al*.⁴ proved that tender coconut water can reduce oxidative stress and antioxidant characterized improve status by decreased MDA levels, increased levels of antioxidant enzymes such as SOD, CAT and GPx in mice fed fructose diet. Loki and Rajamohan showed that TCW has a beneficial effect, significantly lowering MDA levels and increasing levels of antioxidant enzymes such as SOD, CAT and GPx in carbon tetrachloride-induced rats (CCl₄).¹³ Similar conducted research bv Anurag and Rajamohan³⁴ proved that tender coconut water improves mitochondria and provides protection against isoproterenol (free radical) induced damage. Zulaikhah et al. study showed that TCW can lower total cholesterol (TC), low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and triglycerides (TG) levels and decrease height-density lipoprotein (HDL).¹⁴ The results of subsequent studies in human demonstrated TCW can increase the antioxidant enzyme that superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT), glutathione peroxidase (GPx), decrease lipid

peroxidation, and prevent oxidative stress in the traditional gold miners exposed to mercury.¹⁵

A. Type (Varieties) of Coconut

There are distinct varieties of coconut, but in general, it can be divided into two groups namely:

- a. Dwarf Coconut is a variety of coconut that yield nuts after 4-6 years of planting for example examples ivory coconut (Eburnia variety), coconut king (Regia), and king malabar (Pretiosa) and quail (Pumila).
- b. The deep coconut is a new coconut that yield fruit after reaching the age of 15 years after planting, the height of the tree can reach 30 meters for examples green coconut (Viridis), red coconut (Rubescens)

Hybrids are the inter varietal crosses between dwarf deep coconut.

B. Coconut morphology ^{11.12}

Coconut trees can grow up to ± 30 m and live for 70 years. Coconuts grow in clusters and usually 1 side bunches 5 to 12 pieces. An adult coconut tree usually produces a new cluster every month or about 12 bunches per year. A productive coconut tree can produce 100-140 coconuts per year.³¹

Coconut (*Cocos nucifera* Linn), shaped like an egg or ellipse, varies in size, There are several varieties, different varieties have slightly different flavors. It consists of a network of fibrous outer layers called coconut husk (mesocarp) that covers a hard layer called a shell (endocarp). In in the shell there is a nucleus (endosperm) which is believed to be the most important part of the coconut. Below are examples of morphology of types of green coconut (*vidity Viridis*) of ordinary type and '*wulung*'



Figure 1. Wulung Green Coconut t



Figure 2. Ordinary Green Coconut



Figure 3. Morphology of coconut^{11.12}

The nutrition, taste, size, texture, water and coconut flesh depend on coconut varieties and fruit maturity level, to achieve maximum maturity level takes between 12 - 13 months. After 6-7 months, coconut has a soft, thin, jelly-like meat (endosperm) and can be eaten with a spoon. At the age of 10-12 months it is referred to as mature coconut where the amount of water becomes reduced by about 15-30% from the weight of the fruit or about 300 mL, has a layer of hard and thick meat, and the taste becomes less sweet. ^{11.12} Growth of coconut fruit based on age 2 is presented in figure 2.



Figure 4. Coconut growth based on age¹⁶

TCW is called the "fluid of life", referred to as the Coconut Water Tender (TCW), where tender means soft flesh like jelly.¹¹ The total water and sugar content reaches a maximum when the coconut is between 6-7 months of age, at this age coconut water has the sweetest and delicious taste. The content of water and sugar will be reduced with increasing age of coconut maturity. ^{11,12,16}

TCW is the most nutritious healthy drink from palm tree, is a natural isotonic drink that has content similar to our body's blood plasma.¹¹ The content of macro and micro nutrients found in tender coconut water can lower lipids, protect the heart and liver.^{17,18} The content of nutrients of TCW is influenced by the age of fruit maturity, soil nutrient content and environmental conditions.¹²

C. TCW's Composition

The measurement of the composition of TCW identified by Laboratorium Penelitian

dan Pengujian Terpadu (LPPT) and the chemical laboratory MIPA of Universitas Gajah Mada Yogyakarta with KLT and HPLC method. Examined the type of coconut water is the ordinary green coconut water and green coconut water wulung (Viridis variety) in range 5 to 7 months, where coconut water is commonly called coconut water (coconut milk tender).

Tabe 11.Coconutwatercomposition (Viridis Varies)

	Type of Green	
Component	Coconut(Viridis)	
Components	Wulung	Ordinary
Vitamin C (Ascorbit	32.50	32.50
Acid) (mg / L)		
Amino acid (µg/mL)		
- L- Aspartic	115.60	30.81
- L-Glutamic	56.65	28.90
- L- Glutamine	< 0.05	6.32
- L-Threonine	25.15	13.40
- L-Glycine	19.01	16.08
- L-Arginine	12.68	12.63
- L-Alanine	22.18	22.97
- L-Tyrosine	23.57	9.95
- L-Thryptophan+	< 0.13	235.22
L-Methionine		
- L-Valine	13.27	11.83
- L-Phenylalanine	12.68	8.80
- L-Isoleucine	10.10	11.48
- L-Leucine-	19.61	17.80
- L-Lycine-	23.77	26.22
- L-Histidine+	47.34	26.41
Serine		
Mineral (mg/Kg)		
- Cu (Cuprum)	< 0.02	0.40
- Fe (Iron)	6.00	0.39
- Mg (Magnesium)	146.16	74.24
- Mn (Mangan)	0.23	2.50
- Zn (Zink)	2.20	0.83
- Na (Natrium)	560.03	24.22
- K	6.31	2908.46
(Potassium)		
- P (Phospor)	8.76	94.43

Source: LPPT and Chemical Laboratory of MIPA UGM

D. Health Benefits of TCW for Health1. Natural Isotonic Drinks

High potassium in coconut water is necessary in maintaining osmotic pressure inside and outside the cell. The living cell membrane is a semi permeable membrane. When a cell is placed in a solution with a higher osmotic pressure (hypertonic), then the water in the cell will come out so that the cell is wrinkled and this process is called plasmolysis. In contrast, if the cell is placed in a solution of lower osmotic pressure (hypotonic), then the water from outside will enter the cell and will cause the cell to swell and this process is called plasmoptysis.¹⁹ To keep the cells from being lay sided the osmotic pressure must be the isotonic. same or Coconut water called "water of life invarious place in

the world because efficacy treatment. Cocon ut water is called a natural isotonic drink because of the electrolyte content such as sodium and potassium contained in it.¹¹ TCW can be used as ready to drink food product having natural health beneficial nutrients.²⁰

2. Prevents oxidative stress

According to Bhagya *et al*. TCW can reduce systolic pressure, lower triglyceride and free fatty acids. Mice with fructose diet treated with TCW reduced MDA levels as a parameter of lipid peroxidation, and increased antioxidant enzyme activity. The conclusions of this study indicate that tender coconut water therapy can effectively reduce the occurrence of oxidative stress and improve the antioxidant status in mice fed fructose diet.⁴ Prathapan & Rajamohan showed that TCW significantly reduced the oxidative stress induced by isoproterenol (ISO) and exerted significant antithrombotic effects.⁷ Anurag ²¹ showed that tender coconut water has a positive effect on mitochondrial activity and protects cells from free radical damage in isoproterenol-induced mice.²¹ TCW is a rich of L-arginine and vitamin C. Free radical generation can be reduced due to L-arginine, vitamin C acts as a powerful antioxidant to peroxidative tissue

L-arginine can inhibit damage. the generation of ROS and lipid peroxidation.⁴ Loki & Rajamohan reported that tender coconut water was able to lower levels of MDA and increase antioxidant enzymes SOD, CAT, GPx. in CCI4-induced rats.¹³ Zulaikhah & Sampurna proves that tender coconut water can prevent oxidative stress due to mercury exposure the traditional gold miners.²²

3. Antioxidant Activity

TCW is able to increase levels of antioxidant enzymes: Muhammad et all.reported that Coconut water vinegar has helped to attenuate acetaminophenliver damage by restoring induced antioxidant activity and suppression of inflammation.¹³ The study of Zulaikhah et al, proved that the administration of TCW 450 mL/day for 30 days increased SOD and GPx levels in traditional gold miners mercury.¹⁵ Agbafar et to exposed *al.* study stated that coconut water is able to increase the levels of SOD and GPx.23 Some evidence points toward an antioxidant action of coconut water. Thus. administering coconut water (6 mL/100 g of body weight) to female rats intoxicated with carbon tetrachloride recovered the action of antioxidant enzymes SOD and CAT (catalase) levels and decreased lipid peroxidation. Coconut water is also rich in L-arginine, which significantly reduces the generation of free radicals and has antioxidant activity, as well as ascorbic acid, which decreases lipid peroxidation in rats²⁹

Lipid peroxidation Activity (Reduces MDA levels)
 Signs of lipid peroxidation include MDA levels. The content of organic and inorganic ions in tender coconut water plays an important role in the antioxidant system of the human body can normalize cell function, increase antioxidant activity, increase bone formation, increase hemoglobin, gene expression, amino acid metabolism, fat and

Zulaikhah ST., IJPSR, 2019; Vol. 10(2): .

carbohydrate.¹² TCW can also be used to protect the heart and prevent peroxidation.^{4.7} al. proved Zulaikhah et that the administration of 450 mL/day of TCW 30 days lowers MDA levels in traditional gold miners exposed to mercury.¹⁵ Loki & Rajamohan reported that TCW was able to decrease MDA levels in CCl₄-induced rats.¹³ Agbafar *et al.* studies suggest that coconut water is capable of lowering MDA levels as lipid peroxidation markers.²³ Lima et al. Show administering coconut water (6 mL/100 g of body weight) to female rats tetrachloride intoxicated with carbon recovered the action of decreased lipid peroxidation.29

5. Improve Lipid Profile

According Bhagya et al. tender coconut lower trigleserid and water free fatty acids.⁴ is supported by Zulaikhah et al. showing that TCW lower total cholesterol, triglyceride levels, LDL levels and increase HDL levels.¹⁴ The findings of Agbafar et al, showed that coconut water reduce total is able to cholesterol. triglycerides and LDL and can reduce HDL.²³ TCW could also reduce total cholesterol, LDL, and triglyceride levels in serum. Administering coconut water (4 mL/100 g body weight) in male rats counteracted the increases in these cholesterol substances promoted by feeding.²⁹

6. Improve Blood Pressure

According to Bhagya *et al.* TCW can lower systolic pressure.⁴ The finding of Farapti *et al.* proved that fresh tender coconut water 300 ml administered twice a day for 14 consecutive days to lower systolic blood pressure, but not the diastolic blood pressure.²⁴ TCW is useful for preventing dehydration, reducing swelling in the hands and feet, protecting against cancer, helping the blood sugar balance of diabetics, providing ionic mineral resources, increasing digestion, helping to relieve constipation, reducing the risk of heart disease, improving blood circulation, lowering blood pressure high, prevent atherosclerosis, helps prevents abnormal blood clotting, has anti-aging properties, restores strength and elasticity to the skin, reduces wrinkles and sagging skin, as enhances antioxidant. immune an function.^{8,11,25} Research Gullapalli *et al.* states that the consumption of the coconut water is decreased in the blood pressure in primary hypertensive patients. The systolic and diastolic blood pressure (BP) of experimental group decreased by 10.5 mm Hg and 6.8 mm Hg respectively.²⁶

7. Cardioprotective activity

Epidemiological studies suggest that high levels of HDL can prevent heart disease (cardiovascular diseases) such as ischemic stroke, myocardial infarction.²³ Anurag and Raiamohan showed that coconut water has cardioprotective effect in experimental myocardial infarction induced in rats.¹⁸ An important biological action of coconut was demonstrated using an experimental model of myocardial infarction induced by isoproterenol in rats. Feeding these animals with TCW protected against the induction of myocardial infarction and decreased mitochondrial lipid peroxidation.²⁹

8. Anti-inflammatory effects

The anti-nociceptive and anti-inflammatory effects observed in this study, like other biological properties of coconut water, may be due to its unique composition of sugars, vitamins, minerals, amino acids and cytokinin acids. This reduces threshold in both lactating and adult rats. This anti-inflammatory potential of coconut water may be linked descriptively with inhibiting prostaglandin production, thereby reducing inflammation and pain. The results of the study show that coconut water possesses analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties in aduration-dependent manner. The analgesic property was demonstrated on the basis of thermal nociception in the test models of hot plate and tail immersion, and chemical

Zulaikhah ST., IJPSR, 2019; Vol. 10(2): .

nociception in formalin-induced paw licking and acetic acid induced writhing tests. Antiinflammatory effect was evaluated using the same test model of carrageenan-induced paw edema.Coconut water is able to prevent inflammation.²⁷

9. Diarrhea Therapy

Coconut water is rich enzyme systems include very effective and selective reductase, polyphenol oxidase (PPO) and peroxidase (POD). These are involved in its development of a brownish color when it is exposed to air for a long time. Based on its content and properties, coconut water has been used in the treatment of child and adult diarrhea, and gastroenteritis as well as for urinary stone dissolution, short-term intravenous hydration and protecting against gastrointe stinal tract infections.²⁸

10. Antidiabetic activities

The effects of mature coconut water were also evaluated and compared with glibenclamide in alloxan-induced diabetic rats. Treatment of diabetic rats with lyophilized mature coconut water (1000 mg/kg body weight) or glibenclamide (0.6 mg/kg body weight) reduced blood glucose levels (129.23±1.95 and 120±2.3 mg/dL, respectively) when compared with the untreated control (275.32±4.25 mg/dL). Coconut water also increased insulin levels and liver glycogen concentrations and reduced glycated hemoglobin levels in diabetic rats. In addition, elevated levels of liver function enzymes markers like alkaline phosphatase, serum glutamate oxaloacetate transaminase, and serum glutamate pyruvate transaminase in diabetic rats were significantly reduced upon treatment with mature coconut water. It was also observed that diabetic rats showed altered levels of blood urea, serum creatinine, and albumin, and the albumin/globulin ratio was significantly reversed by treatment with mature coconut water and glibenclamide.²⁹

11. Increase hemoglobin levels

Tender coconut water is effective to reduce the parasitaemia index and increase hemoglobin levels in mice inoculated Swiss PBA, but effect in human malaria is not confirmed and need further investigation.³⁰

Another benefits

TheCoconutDevelopmentBoard (CDB) states that TCW can be utilizedto:

- a. Feeding baby with intestinal disorders,
- b. Oral rehydration,
- c. Preventing body chillness
- d. Preventing prickly heat, eliminating rash caused by chicken pox, measles etc.
- e. Killing the worms,
- f. Good drinks in case of cholera,
- g. Diuretics,
- h. Treating kidney and urethral stones,
- i. Preventing urinary tract infections,
- j. Intravenous injection in case of emergency,
- k. Detoxification toxins in cases of poisoning,
- 1. A tonic for the elderly and the sick, and m.Urinary tract antiseptics.¹²

TCW contains an electrolyte fluid that maintains the body's osmotic pressure, can be used as an intravenous fluid in an emergency. In case of emergency in remote regions of the world and during World War II, coconut water was used as a short-term intravenous hydration and resuscitation fluid,²⁷ TCW was used as a substitute for fluids and nutrients at the time of the babies suffering from diarrhea in Vietnam.¹¹

CONCLUSION

Experimental studies involving human and animals showed that TCW can be used to prevent oxidative stress, Antioxidant activity, Lipid peroxidation Activity, Improve Lipid Profile, Blood Pressure, Cardioprotective

Zulaikhah ST., IJPSR, 2019; Vol. 10(2): .

activity, Anti-inflammatory effects, Diarrhea Therapy, Increase hemoglobin levels, Antidiabetic activities and Antithrombotic Activities etc.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declared no conflict of interest REFERENCES

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