

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

A lot of people avoid consuming ghee under the mistaken notion that ghee is only a fat and consumption of ghee increases cholesterol. However, Ayurveda recommends ghee to be included daily in our diet. Ghee is an outstanding nutritional and medicinal substance. It is a very important medicine in the treatment of vata and pitta diseases. 'My son.. don't eat ghee.....your cholesterol will increase, triglycerides will increase, your heart vessels will have cholesterol deposits and there will soon be heart attack...'. These are the words that we hear today from most of the people. This is what they believe and are made to believe. There is a very false belief among people that Ayurvedic medicated ghee will cause increase in cholesterol levels.

We welcome your suggestion and submissions

Enjoy reading and get benefited by Ayurveda.

Vaidya Lakshmi Anoop

Ghee: Nectar or Poison? – Part I

Nowadays people consume oily foods more than 4 or five times. After taking these oily foods even if they don't feel hungry, they take some other foods. Net result is impaired digestion, resulting in increased cholesterol. People avoid ghee and run behind eating fried chips, fried meat and fried chicken, bajjis, samosa, banana fries. Everywhere you go you have only FRIED and FRIED items. These all may be fried in oils that are 10 or 20 times reheated. It is very well told in Ayurveda that an oil heated once should not be reheated, if done so there will be production of toxins in the body, these toxins reflect in the form of increased triglycerides & cholesterol. Nowadays night parties are increasing more and more. And the varieties of food we eat there are heavy to digest beginning the tragedy to the digestive system. Its just like making a bullock pull a heavily loaded cart.



Nutritional Analysis of Ghee

Ghee is composed almost entirely of fat, 62% of which consists of saturated fats; the nutrition facts found on bottled cow's ghee produced in the United States indicates 8 mg of cholesterol per teaspoon.

Fat, Fatty Acids and Other Nutrients	Amount as per 100 gm of Ghee ⁴
Total Fat	99.5 g (153% DV)
Saturated Fat	61.9 g (310% DV)
Mono-saturated Fat	28.7 g
Poly-saturated Fat	3.7 g
Trans Fats	4 g
Omega-3 Fatty Acids	1447 mg
Omega-6 Fatty Acids	2247 mg
Carbohydrates	0
Minerals	0
Cholesterol	256 mg (85%DV)
Phytosterols	0
Vitamin A	3069 IU (61% DV)
Vitamin B,C,D	0
Vitamin E	2.8 mg (14% DV)
Vitamin K	8.6 µg (11% DV)

Ghee and Cholesterol

We believe cholesterol is linked with the formation of plaques in blood vessels leading to atherosclerosis and coronary artery disease, so that we tend to consider cholesterol and heart disease to be synonymous terms. Of course, cholesterol is an umbrella term and we need to look at the types of cholesterol like High Density Lipo Protein, Low Density Lipo Protein, Very Low Density Lipo Protein and their ratios to understand whether lipids are in balance in the body. Modern nutritionists tend to look at ghee with suspicion, given the fact that it is composed almost entirely of fat, 62% of which is saturated fat. One teaspoon of ghee contains 8 mg of cholesterol. But Ghee is a good source of Vitamin K2 which is rarely found in food. This vitamin has the ability to activate the body's mechanism for removing calcium from the arteries and then deposit this calcium to bones.

From the Ayurvedic point of view, the role of cholesterol in heart disease is an illustration of the risks associated with the consumption of substances like ghee when the digestion, absorption and metabolism of the person are compromised. In such a condition, ghee can cause clogging of the channels and lead to blockage of blood vessels. It can cause harm to organs like the heart, liver and kidneys. On the other hand,

in the person who has good digestive capacity, good ability to absorb digested food and clear channels of circulation, ghee can serve as a nourishing tonic and protect the brain from degeneration.

Should we eat ghee or not?

For those who are desirous of enhancing their intelligence, memory and higher mental faculties, ghee is the best choice, proclaims Ayurveda. Cow's Ghee is recommended in Ayurveda as part of not only diet but also medicine. Ghee is considered to be one of the best substances that can strengthen digestion and metabolism and also nourish the tissues and rejuvenate the body. On the other hand, the Ayurvedic texts also warn that ghee should not be consumed when the digestion is poor and when ama (unprocessed digestive and metabolic toxins) has accumulated in the system. When consumed in such a situation, ghee can clog the channels, hamper nutrition and trigger the development of many diseases. In other words, ghee can be both beneficial and harmful to the body. Ghee is a good illustration of the Ayurvedic dictum that there is no substance in the world that is devoid of merits or demerits. The knowledge of Ayurveda provides the know how to weigh the risks and benefits of a substance so that it can be used in the most optimal manner in terms of safety and efficacy. Some studies have shown that ghee has beneficial effects while others have shown harmful effects. This makes perfect sense from the Ayurvedic view point. Ghee delivers the benefits in a body that has good digestion, clear channels of circulation and hardly any traces of ama.

From the Ayurvedic viewpoint, we do not have to worry about the presence of cholesterol in ghee. Perhaps it is for this very reason that the ancient masters realized that ghee is a tonic for the brain. The brain makes up just 2 to 3 % of the total body. However, 25% of the cholesterol in the body is found in the brain. One of the goals of Ayurveda is to preserve cognitive function in old age. And Ayurveda has elaborated methods and practices to make the best use of ghee to achieve this goal. The use of ghee, both plain and medicated, according to the principles of Ayurveda may hold the key to better brain health and preservation of cognitive functions in old age.

Today Anti-Cholesterol Medication is a good marketing area where they focus by saying that you decrease the cholesterol by taking certain tablets on one hand and on the other hand they encourage the people to have more and more fried food item. Result is simple...the person will be a life long customer of the tablets. Ghee is a substance which was regularly used by the ancient people that brought in them many good effects. In the earlier times when there was no prevalence of fast food and fried food, ghee was taken, but people did not have any heart complaints. But the situation has now changed that people don't take ghee and fall victims of heart attack.

Now to answer the question, should we consume ghee, the answer is yes and no. The answer is a definitive yes if one has good digestion, clear channels and no accumulation of ama in the system. The answer is a definitive no if one has impaired digestion, clogged channels of circulation and accumulation of metabolic wastes in the system. Enjoy this natural nectar!

This article is written by Vaidya Darpan Gangil B.A.M.S, M.D, Ayurvedic Physician and Head of Pharmacy at Chakrapani Ayurveda Clinic & Research Center.

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Product of the Month – Ayurvedic Pure Ghee

Ayurveda considers ghee the ultimate cooking oil, with diverse mind/body benefits listed in the ancient texts. It helps in proper digestion and absorption. It enhances brain function. Ghee has been given the cherished title of "Rasayana" in Ayurveda — pre-eminent herbs and foods that help overall health, longevity and well-being.

Ayurvedic Pure Ghee does not spoil easily, and actually preserves the original freshness and potency of herbs and foods. It does not need refrigeration.

For more details on Ayurvedic Pure Ghee please [click here](#)

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