Coconut water fortifies diet when substituted for non nutritive drinks, research shows

By Hank Schultz, 03-May-2013

Coconut water can make a positive nutritional contribution to the diet if it is used to replace high calorie, non nutritional beverages, according to new research presented the recent Experimental Biology conference in Boston.

One of the authors of the report, Cathy Kapica, PhD, who an adjunct professor of nutrition at Tufts University near Boston, said she and her colleagues wanted to see if coconut water could be a viable substitute for the significant slice of the US nutritional pie occupied by non nutritive beverages.

“We did look at overall beverage consumption in the US, and pretty much everybody on a daily basis drinks something that is a non nutritional beverage,” Kapica told FoodNavigator-USA.

“The goal was to see how including coconut water into the diet, specifically by replacing non nutritional soft drinks, that is carbonated beverages, fruit drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks, what are the impacts on the nutrient content of the diet.

“Bottom line: You decrease sugars, you decrease calories and, more importantly you increase some nutrients that have been identified as being in short supply in the US diet, and that is potassium and magnesium,” she said.

Benefits of potassium

Kapica said the potassium contribution was especially beneficial, as potassium works in concert with sodium, which is in high supply in the US diet. Fruits and vegetables are the dietary sources of potassium, and US consumers apparently aren’t eating enough of these to offset their sodium intake.

“The issue why potassium is so important there are a lot of conversation around that people consume too much sodium. Sodium and potassium work in a ratio; you want as much potassium and sodium in your system or preferably more potassium,” Kapica said.

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The research was funded by Vita Coco and used its product, and the results are specific to Vita Coco, Kapica said. Vita Coco differs from other coconut water products on the market in that it is

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