

A Dark Chocolate a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

Here's news that's not hard to swallow – eating a small, 1.4 oz of dark chocolate a day is actually good for you. Many people don't realize that chocolate is plant-derived, as are the fruits and vegetables recommended for a healthy heart.



Antioxidants

Dark chocolate, not milk chocolate, is a potent antioxidant. Antioxidants are substances that protect cells from free radicals, destructive molecules that are implicated in heart disease and other ailments. An extensive clinical trial proved that dark chocolate that contains epicatechin, a plant flavonoid, improved blood vessel function than dark chocolate without flavonoids. Flavonoids are antioxidants that keep cholesterol from gathering in blood vessels, reduce the risk of blood clots, and slow down the immune responses that lead to clogged arteries.

However, this doesn't license you to go on a chocolate binge. Eating more dark chocolate can help lower blood pressure if you've reached a certain age and have mild high blood pressure. You still have to balance the extra calories by eating less of other things.

Dark Chocolate vs. Milk Chocolate

Milk chocolate typically has 15% to 25% cocoa. Dark chocolate tends to have 50% to +80% cocoa. In terms of calories and fat, the two chocolates are pretty close! But dark chocolate's nutritious advantage comes from its deep dark colour. Both milk and dark chocolate get their colour from the cocoa bean, which gets its colour from flavonoids. The darker the chocolate, the more flavonoids it contains. And more flavonoids mean more antioxidant protection. The milk in milk chocolate may even make it hard for your body to absorb those antioxidants in the first place.



Dark Chocolate, 70-85% Cocoa 1.4 oz

Nutritional Information (per serving)			
Calories	218	Monounsaturated Fat	
Protein	4 g	Cholesterol	0 mg
Carbohydrate	18.9 g	Sodium	5 mg
Total Fat	15.9 g	Fibre	5 g
Saturated Fat	9.9 g		

Milk Chocolate 1.4 oz

Nutritional Information (per serving)			
Calories	212	Monounsaturated Fat	
Protein	3 g	Cholesterol	9 mg
Carbohydrate	23.6 g	Sodium	31 mg
Total Fat	11.8 g	Fibre	1.3 g
Saturated Fat	5.6 g		