

The Benefits of Eating Dark Chocolate

Chocolate is Anti-Inflammatory

Dark chocolate is packed with antioxidants, called flavonoids or polyphenols, that help reduce inflammation. Reducing inflammation is key to preventing and reversing chronic illness.

Chocolate Helps Regulate Your Immune System

New research suggests that cocoa helps modulate the body's immune response in those with autoimmune diseases.

Chocolate Protects Your Heart

Chocolate is brimming with nutrients to promote heart health. The flavonoids in chocolate help prevent heart disease by lowering your blood pressure and improving blood flow to your brain and heart. Dark chocolate also has a high concentration of resveratrol, a powerful antioxidant that reduces the risk of blood clots that can lead to a heart attack, and prevents the oxidation of "bad" LDL cholesterol. Chocolate is a great source of resveratrol.

Chocolate is Packed with Essential Thyroid Nutrients

In addition to flavonoids and resveratrol, chocolate is also loaded with iron, zinc, and selenium, three nutrients that are [essential for thyroid health](#). All three of these nutrients are needed to convert inactive T4 thyroid hormones into their active T3 form.

Chocolate is Rich in Magnesium

Magnesium is a mineral that acts as a cofactor for more than 300 enzymes in the body. This means that magnesium helps your body perform many of its normal functions, like building proteins, maintaining muscle and nerve function, controlling your blood sugar, and regulating your blood pressure. Magnesium is also required in metabolism, bone development, DNA formation, and glutathione production.

Chocolate Improves Your Mood

Not only is it delicious, Cacao, the purest form of chocolate, is a precursor to two important neurotransmitters, dopamine and serotonin. These chemicals act as messengers in your brain to regulate your mood.

Chocolate Boosts Your Brain

Recent studies have shown that the all-important flavonoids found in dark chocolate accumulate in the areas of your brain responsible for memory and cognition. In another study, dark chocolate was shown to increase attention span and improve cognitive abilities.



Chocolate Can Contribute to Weight Loss

It's true that while eating too much chocolate— especially chocolate loaded with additives, milk, and excess sugar— can cause weight gain, cacao has been shown to have a reverse effect because it contains dietary oleoylethanolamide, or OEA. OEA signals to your brain that you are full, and acts to curb your appetite. So eating a nice square of dark chocolate is a great way end to your meal and keep you feeling satisfied for longer.

In Summary

Clearly, there are many health benefits to eating chocolate. The trouble is that most chocolate is processed and full of unhealthy or even toxic additives that overshadow its positive effects. Here are a couple of tips for getting the maximum nutritional benefit from your chocolate, without the junk.

- Make sure your chocolate is at least 72-85% cacao. The flavonoids that provide many of the health benefits of chocolate come from pure cacao, so the higher the percentage of cacao, the more beneficial your chocolate will be. Also, typically the more cacao there is, the less sugar, additives, and junk there is.
- Enjoy in moderation. When it comes to chocolate, you really can have too much of a good thing, so keep your indulgence to one or two dark chocolate squares after a meal, and reserve the more decadent treats for special occasions.

Dark chocolate can be found at most grocery stores or specialty markets in the baking section or in the candy section.

Reference:

Dr. Amy Meyers, *The Meyers Way*

