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100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

The Health Benefits of Chocolate

By Susie Cortright

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With the New Year come and gone, many of us are making good on a resolution to eat healthier. So what's a chocolate lover to do?

Good news. Research says you can have your cake and eat it, too. As long as that cake is chocolate.

For centuries, chocolate has been used to treat diseases and maladies such as depression. Civilizations from Mexico to Europe have hailed chocolate as an aphrodisiac. The U.S. government officially recognized its virtues in World War II, making the chocolate candy bar standard issue for the military.

Chocolate's scientific name, theobroma cacao, is literally translated as "food of the gods," and we chocolate cravers don't need any studies to tell us the power of chocolate in mood alteration. Its feel good chemicals have long been associated with feelings of love, safety, and comfort. Maybe that's why Americans eat an average of 12 pounds of chocolate per year.

Chocolate contains vitamins A, B1, C, D, and E, as well as potassium, sodium, iron, and fluorine. Now, researchers say those creamy chocolate confections may actually help us live longer, too.

Harvard researchers tracked nearly 8,000 males, with an average age of 65. Those men who enjoyed chocolate and

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candy lived almost a year longer than those who did not. Those who ate one to three candy bars per month had a 36 percent lower risk of death (compared to the people who ate no candy), while those who ate three or more candy bars per week had a 16 percent lower risk.

Why? The researchers say they don't know for sure, but that it might have something to do with antioxidants. Chocolate contains the same antioxidant chemicals as wine (phenols). In the chocolate bar, phenols help preserve the fat. In our bodies, phenol can help prevent atherosclerosis.

Like anything, chocolate is best enjoyed in moderation. Just one ounce of solid chocolate packs about 150 calories and can be as much as 50 percent fat. So, for your next chocolate fix, consider reduced fat alternatives, such as chocolate covered foods or chocolate syrup.

Susie Cortright is the author of several books for women and founder of the award-winning Momscape.com, a website designed to help busy women find balance. Visit <http://www.momscape.com> today and get Susie's *free* course-by-email "6 Days to Less Stress" as well as the *free* pdf ebook, "Spa Recipes for All Seasons."

Is Chocolate A New Health Food?

By Meri Raffetto RD

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Could it be possible that our beloved chocolate may actually be good for us? This is the nutrition news we have all been waiting for. So here is the scoop on chocolate and its health benefits. Yes, you read right, health benefits!

Recent studies show that cocoa and dark chocolate with a high cocoa content contain many heart-healthy antioxidants. They contain a compound called flavonoids which may help prevent the oxidation of LDL (bad) cholesterol and raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels in the blood. There is also some evidence that these flavonoids may prevent certain cancers.

It is important that we are all on the same page here, not all chocolate have these health benefits. The healthy flavonoids found in chocolate are found in the cocoa butter and cocoa solids. Milk chocolate is diluted with milk and sugar and contains little amounts of these substances, therefore providing fewer health benefits. So, for those of you who love dark chocolate this is your lucky day! The darker the chocolate, the higher the cocoa content and the more antioxidants it contains. The quality of the

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chocolate you consume is also important. The cocoa butter is quite pricey so less expensive brands will replace the cocoa butter with milk fats and hydrogenated oils which are bad for our health. Look for high quality chocolates with their main ingredients being cocoa butter and cocoa solids. Unsweetened cocoa powder is one of the purest forms of chocolate you can eat and is lower in fat and calories than other chocolates.

Although this is great news for all chocolate lovers, don't forget that most chocolate (unless you use unsweetened cocoa powder) does still contain sugar and saturated fat.

And please remember calories. An ounce of chocolate contains around 135 calories. So enjoy a cup of hot cocoa or an ounce of chocolate once in awhile to contribute to your health and not to your waistline!

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Meri Raffetto is a Registered Dietitian and a recognized professional in the area of nutrition and wellness. She has developed online weight management programs to help people get off of diets and get into way of life. For more information or to sign up for our free newsletter, visit www.reallivingnutrition.com.



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