

## Can You Believe That Chocolate Could Actually Be Good For Your Heart?

Chocolate has long been a favorite confection for people of all ages and now this tasty treat is receiving recognition for being good for your heart health as well. Studies have found that dark chocolate contains antioxidants, which help promote a healthy heart by improving the blood flow. This lowers the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

### What is an Antioxidant?

Antioxidants remove free radicals from the blood stream. Free radicals are a natural product of blood cells. The world is also filled with environmental toxins that also contribute to their production. There has been research that has discovered that eating dark chocolate lowers the risk of heart attacks and high blood pressure by removing the free radicals and ensuring that the blood can flow more freely through the veins. It is important to note that it is only the dark type of chocolate that has these benefits. Tests run on white and milk chocolate did not show these positive benefits.

### What Research Was Done on Chocolate?

A Swiss team of researchers ran tests on 20 volunteers who were smokers. They were given 40 grams of chocolate and were not allowed to eat any other food that was rich in antioxidants like certain vegetables. After 2 hours, there was a marked improvement noted in the volunteers who ate dark chocolate that was made up of 74% cocoa. The improvement noted was in the improved flow of blood through the veins. The research also showed that the chocolate significantly reduced the risk of blockages by half.

### How Much Chocolate Should I Eat?

You should try to include a portion of dark chocolate everyday, but before you run out to the grocery store to fill the larder with dark chocolate treats, remember that it also contains a lot of sugar and fat, right along with those antioxidants. Before you add it to your regular diet, decide how much you can safely eat without expanding your waistline. Naturally the more active you are, the more you will burn calories.

This would be true of people who exercise regularly or have jobs that require a lot of physical activity. If you have a sedentary job where you sit at a desk all day, or do not follow a regular exercise plan, than you should lower the portion of chocolate that you eat. If you don't follow an exercise plan, then consider starting one. Exercising three times a week for 30 minutes has also been shown to strengthen the heart. While you are improving your health with chocolate, you can get even greater benefits by including exercise to your regimen.

These new health benefits of dark chocolate will let you please both your heart and your palate.

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### About the Author

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