Chocolate and Health

Chocolate is a delicious treat with some exciting potential health benefits. But which type of chocolate is the best for you? How much should you eat? There are several types of chocolate each with differing amounts of cocoa, cocoa butter and sugar.

What Are The Difference Types of Chocolate?

Cocoa Powder – is simply dried, ground cocoa beans, with the cocoa butter removed.

Dark chocolate – also called bitter or bittersweet, contains a high % of cocoa solids. Cocoa solids are the key to chocolate’s health benefits. Cocoa butter and sugar are usually added.

Milk chocolate- contains milk powder, sugar, cocoa butter and a small percentage of cocoa solids.

White chocolate doesn’t contain any cocoa solids, only sugar, milk, and cocoa butter.

For approximately 1 oz of any chocolate you will get 120-150 calories. Not all are equal for health... Look for brands with higher Cocoa % and lower sugar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chocolate per Oz</th>
<th>Sugar</th>
<th>Polyphenol</th>
<th>Flavonoid</th>
<th>Cocoa Solids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa Pwdr</td>
<td>0.5g</td>
<td>1035mg</td>
<td>331mg</td>
<td>88-96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>13g</td>
<td>465mg</td>
<td>520mg</td>
<td>45-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>14g</td>
<td>66mg</td>
<td>239mg</td>
<td>5-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>17g</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Benefits?

Dark chocolate also contains powerful anti-oxidants such as polyphenols and flavonoids. When consumed in small amounts (ie:30g/day), dark chocolate has the potential to lower blood pressure, decrease insulin resistance, increase good cholesterol and lower bad cholesterol. Dark chocolate has approximately four times as many flavonoids as milk chocolate, while white chocolate has none. Choose dark chocolate with at least 70 percent cocoa content.

Chocolate and Mood

Chocolate contains compounds called theobromine and phenylethylamine, which stimulate good chemicals serotonin and dopamine in the brain. Serotonin has the ability to boost mood and lower depression while dopamine regulates motivation, pleasure and reward. Higher contents of cocoa, as in dark chocolate, will have more of these compounds. One theory suggests this may be the root of “chocolate cravings/addiction” but research is inconclusive due to the complexity of this process.

Practice Mindful Eating

Excess consumption of chocolate can lead to weight gain, hypertension and diabetes due to the high content of sugar and fat. The key is to keep portion sizes small (about 30g/1oz) and opt for dark chocolate to reap the potential health benefits.

How much is 1 Oz?

A daily serving of chocolate is 2 Tbs chocolate chips or 1 Bakers dark chocolate square or 6 Tbs Cocoa powder.

Practice mindful eating strategies to help manage the urge to over-consume. For example, focus your attention on all 5 of you senses, your thoughts and emotions as you consume your chocolate. One good tip is to wait 5-10 seconds before chewing, allowing the taste to saturate your taste buds. Savor it! Refer to March’s newsletter on mindful eating to get more details.

Dark Chocolate with Pretzels and Fruit

3 easy steps to savoring a healthy and delicious snack!

Step 1- Melt a 1oz (30g) of dark chocolate in the microwave

Step 2- Prepare a bowl of whole grain pretzels and fruit

Step 3- Drizzle melted chocolate over pretzels and fruit

For more information about this topic or other nutrition related topics book an appointment with one of our Dietitians on staff at the Health and Performance Centre.

Mention this newsletter at your first appointment and receive $20 off your nutrition assessment.

Gabrielle Allison
Registered Dietitian
has over 30 years of experience in nutrition counseling. She specializes in creating nutrition plans for individuals based on their personal health goals.

Visit our website www.uoguelph.ca/hpc/ for more information. Call 519 767 5011 ext.1 to book an appointment.

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Gabrielle has competed in women’s physique body building at national and international levels. She shares her unique expertise in weight loss and sport nutrition – in person or over the phone consultations.