



Can Chocolate Actually Be Good For Your Health?

By Daniel Casciato

If you're like most people, you'll be buying chocolates for that special someone in your life this Valentine's Day. Not only is chocolate the quickest way to a person's heart, but it's also the way to a healthy heart.

"Eating dark chocolate is good for you," says Amy Rosenfield, Shaler Township resident and owner of Mon Aimee Chocolat in the Strip District. "Chocolate has good antioxidants called flavonoids which lower the level of bad cholesterol, or LDL, and reduces the risk of heart disease."

Rosenfield says that chocolate is a natural source of antioxidants. Antioxidants are an electron donor which help to attack or neutralize free radicals. Free radicals are suspected of damaging arteries and triggering buildup of plaque in the wall of blood vessels. Because free radicals contain an odd number of electrons, they are constantly looking to "steal" an electron from any source. Many fruits, vegetables, and even coffee beans are other known sources of antioxidants.

The amount of flavonoids in a particular chocolate depends on how much it has been processed. Light chocolate has the fewest flavonoids, while dark chocolate has the most.

"Dark chocolate has the most antioxidants of all foods," says Rosenfield. "The more you process the chocolate, the more you lose the benefits."

Another benefit of eating dark chocolate, according to Rosenfield, is that it helps to prevent cavities. "However, adding sugar to the chocolate takes that benefit away," she says.

Pay close attention to the amount of cocoa in the ingredients, she adds. Most dark chocolates contain 65-80 percent cocoa mass. "You need to look for the least amount of ingredients because it means there are fewer additives in the chocolate," she says.

While there are many benefits from eating chocolate there is a limit to how much you should eat. "Like most foods, eating in moderation is good for you," Rosenfield explains. "Eating just two to three bite size pieces of dark chocolate is more satisfying than a Snickers bar. Most candy bars contain sugar and other additives to make it addicting. With dark chocolate, you'll feel full and more satisfied with only a few bites."

So there's no need to feel guilty about indulging in some chocolates this Valentine's Day. Just make sure it's dark and you eat it in moderation. Your heart will thank you.

- [Point North - Home](#)
- [Subscriptions](#)
- [Advertise with Us](#)
- [Post Your Events](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

- [Cranberry Search](#)
- [Pittsburgh North Search](#)
- [Cranberry Malls Search](#)
- [Cranberry Connection](#)
- [Cranberry Cup](#)

- [Cover Story](#)
- [Nancy's Corner](#)
- [Been There, Done That](#)
- [Creative Spirit](#)
- [Reflections](#)
- [Laughing at Life](#)
- [Environmental Matters](#)
- [Health & Fitness](#)
- [Connecting with Kids](#)
- [Pause for Paws](#)
- [Gourmet Cooking](#)
- [Men's Issues](#)

- [Women's Health](#)
- [Point North Archives](#)