



Dark Chocolate

Friend or Foe?

For centuries people have eaten chocolate for pleasure, as well as for a number of proposed health benefits, including aphrodisiac effects and increased strength and endurance claims. But perhaps the number one health claim for chocolate today is that it lowers blood lipids and protects against cardiovascular disease. Most studies conducted on this topic suggest a positive correlation between dark chocolate consumption and decreased cardiovascular disease risk factors. But **remember that dark chocolate still contains calories, sugar, and fat, and should be eaten in moderation.** Please read more below to find out why dark chocolate is a healthy choice, and learn how much dark chocolate you can eat each day.

Benefits

- **Flavonoids:** These compounds help protect arteries and reduce inflammation.
- **Cocoa Content:** Dark chocolate has more cocoa than milk chocolate. Cocoa has antioxidant properties.
- **Increase HDL (good cholesterol):** Moderate amounts of dark chocolate can help your body make more good cholesterol.
- **Not made with milk:** Dark chocolate is not made with milk, so people can absorb the nutrients more easily.

*Americans eat an estimated **11.64 pounds** of chocolate every year.*



U.S. chocolate manufacturers use about 3.5 million pounds of whole milk every day to make chocolate.

ORAC* Values of Top Antioxidant Foods (per 100 grams)

Unprocessed Cocoa Powder	26,000
Açai Berry	18,500*
Dark Chocolate	13,120
Prunes	5,770
Raisins	2,830
Blueberries	2,400
Blackberries	2,036
Strawberries	1,540
Spinach, Raw	1,260
Broccoli Florets	890
Red Grapes	739
Cherries	670

Source: Data from U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Journal of the American Chemical Society.

* Source: Brunswick Laboratories

Cocoa powder and dark chocolate are known for their high levels of antioxidants.

Recommendations

- Eating 1 small square of dark chocolate per day is a recommended amount.
- Always choose dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa content for the most health benefits.
- Try to choose chocolate that has been made with cocoa butter instead of coconut or palm oil.

