

NEW
Health

EAT CHOCOLATE & boost your health!

Yes, indulging your sweet tooth can be good for you!

It's the news we've all been waiting for: research has found that chocolate lovers are more likely to have fewer chronic health issues than those who don't eat it!

The study by the American Heart Association also found the highest number of chocolate lovers are young and physically active. But before you go on a binge, take some advice.

'It needs to be good-quality chocolate, which is dark chocolate with a cocoa percentage of 70 per cent or more,' says Margaret Hays, accredited practising dietitian and Dietitians Association of Australia spokesperson.

Here's what else the tasty sweet stuff can do...

...BOOST ESSENTIAL MINERALS

'Cocoa contains high amounts of magnesium, iron, riboflavin, copper and manganese, which assist

with improving overall health. Magnesium helps with relaxing blood vessels, improving circulation and blood flow,' says The Healthy Chef and author of *Healthy Baking*, Teresa Cutter.

...LOWER YOUR RISK OF HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

Cocoa is one of the richest sources of antioxidants in the world, including a type called flavonoids, which are also found in tea, red wine and some fruits and vegetables. A study published in the journal *Heart* found that people who ate 16g to 100g of chocolate a day had a lower risk of heart disease and stroke than those who didn't eat it at all.

...IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY AND MOOD

Eating cocoa-rich chocolate can increase brain function by boosting blood flow, and have beneficial effects on your reasoning, intellect, memory and recall, according to a study by Loma Linda University in California. 'Dark chocolate also contains serotonin, which acts as an antidepressant,' Margaret says.

...HELP YOU LOSE WEIGHT

Yes, really! According to research from the Faculty of Life Sciences at the University of Copenhagen, dark chocolate is far more filling than milk chocolate, and can lessen our cravings

for sweet, salty and fatty foods.

'Remember though, that chocolate is kilojoule-dense – it has lots of energy in small amounts. Only buy small serves, so you're not tempted to eat a whole block,' Margaret advises.

BETTER WAYS TO GET YOUR FIX

✓ MAKE A HEALTHY HOT CHOCOLATE USING RAW CACAO POWDER (AVAILABLE IN THE HEALTH AISLE OF SUPERMARKETS). 'CACAO IS THE PUREST FORM OF CHOCOLATE YOU CAN CONSUME,' TERESA SAYS. 'SIMPLY ADD WATER OR MILK FOR A DELICIOUS TASTING DRINK THAT YOU CAN HAVE HOT OR COLD.'

✓ EATING MILK CHOCOLATE WON'T GIVE YOU THE HEALTH BENEFITS AS IT'S ALSO LOADED WITH SUGAR AND FAT, AND HAS JUST A FIFTH OF THE COCOA CONTENT AS DARK, WHICH IS WHERE ALL THE GOODNESS COMES FROM.

✓ DARK CHOCOLATE WITH A HIGH COCOA PERCENTAGE TASTES BITTER. PAIR IT WITH FRUIT IF YOU NEED MORE SWEETNESS – TRY ORANGE SEGMENTS DIPPED IN MELTED DARK CHOCOLATE, OR EAT IT WITH NUTS FOR GOOD FATS AND MORE ANTIOXIDANTS.

3 OF THE BEST!

