

Take Heart: Chocolate Can Be Good for You

Although recent studies suggest the resveratrol in red wine, chocolate, and grapes might not be as healthful as previously thought, take heart. Chocolate contains other ingredients that are good for you.

Most people know green veggies like broccoli are good for you, and blueberries are rich in healthy antioxidants. Now doctors say flavanol, the antioxidant found in cocoa, helps keeps your blood flowing.

“Flavanoids are something that, depending on what food it is, will help different systems,” Laura Jeffers, a registered dietician with the Cleveland Clinic, told CBN News. “And so the main flavanoid in chocolate is called flavanol. And flavanol will help to improve blood pressure; it helps the blood to clot better so it doesn’t get sticky in the arteries.”

Chocolate as a health food sounds too good to be true, and it turns out there are a couple catches.

Make sure you choose the kind of chocolate with a high percentage of cocoa because it contains the most flavanols. Unfortunately, flavanols tend to make chocolate taste bitter.

“You really want to look for dark chocolate and that high percentage of cocoa, you know, maybe having that 70 percent,” Jeffers continued. “So the brand doesn’t matter. It just really matters on the type of chocolate so that dark chocolate, that high percentage of cocoa.”

To reap the most benefits from chocolate, you only need a small amount.

“I would recommend one ounce of a dark chocolate a few times a week,” Jeffers said. “I don’t think it’s something that you have to have every day.”

Some people avoid chocolate because it contains fat. But Jeffers says don’t worry about that.

“The stearic acid was shown that it does not improve or make your cholesterol worse so that type of saturated fat in chocolate is actually okay to have,” she said.

The bottom line: chocolate can be good for you. Just go dark and enjoy it in moderation.

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