

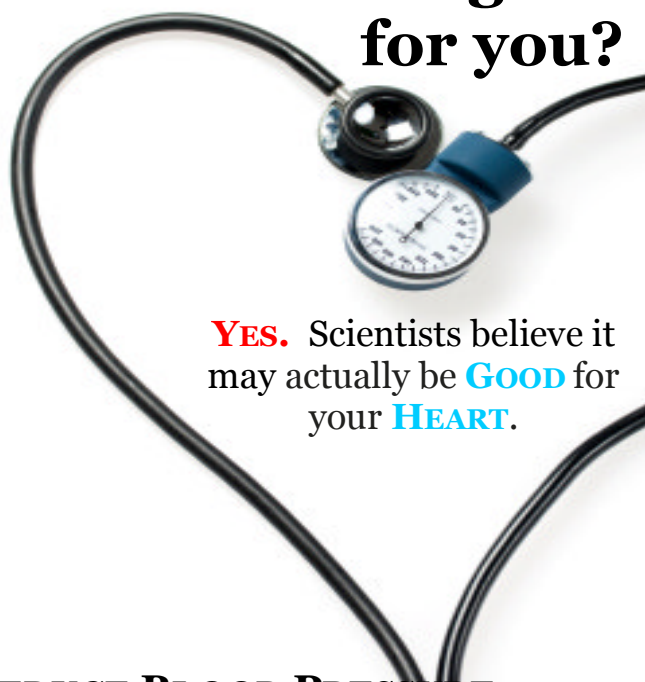
# Benefits of Chocolate

Two tablespoons of [natural cocoa](#) have more antioxidant capacity than four cups of green tea, 1 cup of blueberries and one and half glasses of red wine.

**ANTIOXIDANT POWER.** Chocolate contains many of the health benefits found in plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. That's because chocolate is a plant-based food – it comes from cacao beans which grow on the cacao tree and are full of natural cell-protecting antioxidant compounds called flavonoids, the same compounds found in blueberries, green tea, and red wine. These compounds work to neutralize free radicals that lead to inflammation, an underlying cause of many chronic diseases. Therefore, when choosing chocolate, be sure to choose dark chocolate or chocolate with at least 65% cocoa for its antioxidant power.

**CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH.** Studies show that eating chocolate – primarily dark chocolate – may contribute to improved cardiovascular health. Studies have shown that consumption of dark chocolate or cocoa may help with some vital heart functions by preventing cholesterol from sticking to artery walls, thus improving blood flow, lowering blood pressure, and reducing the strain on your heart. This may effectively reduce your risk of a heart attack or stroke.

## Is Chocolate good for you?



**YES.** Scientists believe it may actually be **GOOD** for your **HEART**.

**REDUCE BLOOD PRESSURE.** If you have high blood pressure, a daily bar-sized serving of flavanol-rich dark chocolate might lower your blood pressure, researchers report in the July 19 issue of *Hypertension: Journal of the American Heart Association*. Both cocoa and dark chocolate have been shown to help lower blood pressure through the production of nitric oxide, a key gas inside artery walls that relaxes and widens arteries which allows more blood to pass through them and thus reduce blood pressure.



<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 ounce 28g (1 ounce (28g))	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 162	Calories from Fat 96
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 11g	16%
Saturated Fat 6g	31%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 2mg	1%
<b>Sodium</b> 3mg	0%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 2g	9%
Sugars 10g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 2%	Iron 10%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
©www.NutritionData.com	

## TIPS WHEN CHOOSING CHOCOLATE



### LOWER BLOOD SUGAR.

For people who must watch their blood sugars or are at risk for diabetes, the good news is that chocolate has a low glycemic index — a measure of the effects of carbohydrates on blood glucose levels – which means that eating chocolate, unlike other foods, will produce only small fluctuations in our blood glucose and insulin levels. In addition, scientists believe the antioxidants in dark chocolate may help improve insulin sensitivity by stimulating the cells to accept glucose. However most of the commercially prepared chocolate on the market is high in added sugar which makes it a very poor choice for someone with or at risk for diabetes. The key is to choose wisely and practice moderation.

**MOOD ELEVATOR.** Chocolate contains phenyl ethylamine, a mild mood elevator, which might be responsible for the pleasurable feelings we get after eating chocolate. In addition, chocolate raises serotonin levels in the brain resulting in a sense of

1. Choose dark chocolate with 65% or higher cocoa content for its antioxidant power.
2. Skip the sugary and fatty fillings which negate many of the benefits you get from eating dark chocolate.
3. Avoid milk chocolate and white chocolate for they tend to be higher in sugar and lower in antioxidants.
4. Enjoy dark chocolate in moderation as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

**VITAL MINERALS.** The health benefits of plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains have long been established. Likewise, cocoa and chocolate naturally contain minerals that are vital for your health including iron, copper, magnesium, and potassium, all of which are key components in maintaining overall good health. On average, based on a 2000 calorie diet, one ounce of dark chocolate can deliver as a percent of the daily requirement:

- 5 percent potassium,
- 10 percent iron,
- 12 percent magnesium,
- 17 percent copper, and
- 19 percent manganese.

### nutraMetrix® ANTIOXIDANTS



100% Antioxidant power  
without the calories

[www.mntworks.nutrametrix.com](http://www.mntworks.nutrametrix.com)



### Phara J. Taylor, MS, RD, LDN

is a registered dietitian and owner of Medical Nutrition Therapy Works specializing in nutrition counseling for weight loss and chronic disease management. She may be reached at 617-461-8503 or email [phara@phara.com](mailto:phara@phara.com).



MNT Works

*Lifestyle Nutrition For  
Everyday Living*

[www.MNTworks.com](http://www.MNTworks.com)

617-461-8503