

# Love and Hate of Chocolates

Our desires tend to change with age, but some desires are so closely bound to every stage of our lives that they tend to die hard. One such desire is our love of chocolates. Chocolate is one of the most famous symbols of love. "Cocoa" is the main ingredient of chocolate and its history began with the Mesoamerican civilization. Ancient people believed that cocoa tree was a gift of god's wisdom. Scientifically, cocoa tree is named as *Theobroma cocoa* - food of the god. According to paleo ecologists' cocoa beans were used as currency in the ancient era and currently one ounce of beans is worth a dollar. Nowadays, people in Europe tend to purchase "dark chocolates" than milk or flavored ones as they have discovered the real meaning of the "god's gift".

## How do we find a good chocolate?

All that glitters is not gold; likewise, all the chocolates are not good. We can find many chocolate-favoured products including drinks, cakes, biscuits, infant foods, candies, cookies, pudding, butter, powders etc. Snickers, Kit Kat, Twix, Milky way, Hershey, Cadbury, Toblerone and Reese's are the most common internationally famous candy bars. However, cocoa content in some chocolate products is about 10% and the rest (90%) is made up of milk, sugar, flavors, emulsifiers, nuts etc. Lesser the cocoa content, lesser the nutrition value of the chocolate bar. Thus,

excessive consumption of these products may cause diabetes, tooth decay, cardiovascular diseases and high blood pressure. One should remember that "a little bit of sweetness can cause a whole lot of bitterness".



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In dark chocolate, the cocoa content is higher than 60%. Pure dark chocolate consists of only cocoa beans and sugar, but some manufacturers add small amount of soy lecithin as an edible emulsifier. Before you purchase a chocolate product, you should check the name of the manufacturer as well as the date of expiry. Then, you should check the list of ingredients and their percentages (healthy chocolates contain 60-85% of cocoa). If there are too many other ingredients in a product, it is not much healthier to consume it. High-quality dark chocolates are not cheap (between 10-20 US dollars) as other chocolates. When you place a piece of a dark chocolate on your tongue, it does not melt immediately as other chocolates, but it tastes bitter than other chocolates.

**Dark chocolate is important to save your heart from strokes as it helps to reduce the LDL value thereby peripheral artery diseases. It also improves blood circulation and prevent platelet aggregation in veins.**

## Importance of dark chocolates

Dark chocolate is a nutrition power house. One ounce (ca. 28 g) of dark chocolate per day is recommended for a healthier life as it contains a lot of minerals (calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, sodium and potassium), vitamins, proteins, good cholesterols (HDL) etc.

Cocoa is one of the best sources of antioxidants. It helps to improve the healthiness of the skin by reducing roughness and increasing the skin's hydration and complexion. Researchers in University of Nottingham have discovered that flavanols in cocoa boost the blood flow to brain and improves the short-term memory and alertness. Flavanols also reduce the high blood pressure and enhance the visual performances such as detecting motions and reading low contrast letters. L-arginine is an amino acid in dark chocolate which acts as a natural sex enhancer as it increases sensation, satisfaction and desire. Phenylethylamine present in cocoa is known as "love drug" which helps to increase the happiness and relieves the stress hormone level. Dark chocolate is important to save your heart from strokes as it helps to reduce the LDL value thereby peripheral artery diseases. It also improves blood circulation and prevent platelet aggregation in veins. Polyphenols and flavanols prevent DNA damages and improve the nucleus integrity of cells. Dark chocolate is known to reduce the risk of cancer.

You can express your love by presenting a chocolate, but you should be careful as your love can be measured by the cocoa content of the gift.

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