

# *Delightful Treat or Super Food in Disguise?*

If you're a chocolate lover, you've probably heard — and even relished — reports that the candy is supposed to be good for your health. But is that really true? Yes, within reason. But only certain types of chocolate. And only when consumed in moderation.

Here's the scoop: Cacao, the main ingredient in dark chocolate, contains flavanols, a group of compounds also found in tea, apples, nuts, and other plant-based foods and beverages. Flavanols can benefit the body in numerous ways, including:

- Lowering blood pressure
- Reducing bad cholesterol
- Improving blood flow
- Easing chronic inflammation

## **Going dark**

Sorry to disappoint any milk and white chocolate fans, but the dark variety is the winner in this case. White chocolate doesn't have flavanols. While milk chocolate has some flavanols, research suggests milk may block your body from absorbing them. And when it comes to dark chocolate, the darker the better — aim for bars that feature 70% cacao or more.

How healthy is dark chocolate? A 2017 American Heart Association study found that raw almonds and dark chocolate can help reduce bad cholesterol in overweight subjects. And the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition published findings in 2021 concluding that a small daily dose of dark chocolate helped reduce the risk of coronary artery illness in 188,000 military veterans.



## **Moderation matters**

All of this isn't to say you should feast on dark chocolate. Yes, it has those healthy flavanols. But it's also loaded with calories. Plus, it has saturated fat, which can affect your cholesterol levels. So, check with your doctor to see if it's OK. If so, enjoy in moderation. And think of dark chocolate like kindness — a little goes a long way.

*Thanks to our friends at Medica for this information.*