

## Are Chocolates bad for you?

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**Pro 17:22** A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.

Nothing makes the heart happier than a goodly slab of milk Chocolate and recent studies on the medicinal benefits of this culinary delight certainly lends credence to the above biblical adage. A surprising number of studies have found that chocolate can help reduce the risk of fatal heart attacks, decrease blood pressure and be of benefit to chronic fatigue syndrome sufferers.

Naturally the question springs to mind 'How much of a good thing is good for you'.

A study published in the June 2015 issue of Heart involving 25,000 volunteers has confirmed the answer as – a lot. Participants in the high consumption group i.e. those eating 15 to 100 grams of chocolate a day, from Mars bars to hot cocoa, were less prone to heart attacks or strokes.

Professor Phyo Myint, from the School of Medicine at the University of Aberdeen stated that "The main message is that you don't need to worry too much if you are only moderately eating chocolate"

Surprisingly these results held true no matter what the chocolate, as previous studies centered only around the dark, bitter variety.

So what's changed?

Apparently chocolate is full of flavonoid antioxidants which results in improved functioning of the inner lining of the blood vessels.

Is there a twist in the tail?

'The results of the study should be viewed with a few cautions' Myint added. For instance, the groups age split was 39 to 70, they were mostly white and many of the participants did not experience the same results, even when eating the same amount of chocolate.

So before you jubilantly run off too overindulge in your favourite

chocolates, professor Myint warns that the study at this stage only provides some evidence that you need not avoid chocolate to protect your cardiovascular health.

The possibility that chocolate eaters engage in other behaviours or eat other foods that are good for the heart can also not be ruled out. "Cocoa beans are not unlike peppers or broccoli etc. They are loaded with phytochemicals that are good for us but if you're overweight and think that eating chocolate will benefit you, you need to think again.

Oh well, I suppose it's a start. Hopefully in my lifetime they'll perfect the study.

**'till next time, but until then your comments are welcomed.**

Steve

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