

Fun Fact of the Week

The Health Benefits Your Valentine's Day Chocolates May Offer*

If you love to get a box of Valentine's Day chocolates, you're not alone. You may immediately think "This is not going to be good for my waistline." But what you may not know is that box of sweet treats may provide your body some health benefits, too.

Chocolate comes from Cacao. The bean is chock-full of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Numerous studies link the properties of the cacao bean to health benefits for your heart. It provides your body with many positive effects.



So, before you dig in, here are some of the possible health benefits you may get from that box of Valentine's Day chocolates you got from your significant other.

Dark Chocolate Improves Heart Health

If your box of Valentine's Day chocolates is filled with dark chocolate, your honey had your heart health in mind. High-quality dark chocolate, made up of 70-85% cacao, helps protect against heart disease.

There is a growing body of studies finding the bioactive plant compounds found in cocoa beans, called polyphenols, improve the [health of your blood vessels](#). The cocoa bean is also packed with plant nutrients called flavonoids. Flavonoids are also [found in many fruits](#) and provide your body a lot of benefits, including:

- Help repair damage
- Provide [antioxidants](#)
- Improve blood flow to the brain
- Aids overall blood flow
- Lowers blood pressure.

So, if you got a box of Valentine's Day fruit dipped in dark chocolate—even better.

A recent study supports the case that moderate chocolate intake can even [lower the risk of developing an irregular heartbeat](#). Researchers found people who ate one to three one ounce servings of chocolate per month developed a 10 percent lower rate of atrial fibrillation. Those who ate one serving per week had a 17 percent lower rate; and those who ate two to six servings per week had a 20 percent lower rate.

Another study found enriching dark chocolate with extra virgin olive oil may provide [several heart-health benefits](#).

Chocolate May Improve Your Mood

One of the components found in dark chocolate is [theobromine](#). This is the primary compound found in cocoa and chocolate and one of the causes for chocolate's mood-elevating effects. Theobromine is similar to caffeine, which is known as its sister chemical.

That means a little piece of chocolate may be able to lift your spirits on a particularly bad day.

Valentine's Day Chocolates May Improve Brain Power

As we mentioned earlier, the compounds found in chocolate can improve blood flow to the brain. In fact, one [study](#) found a link between chocolate and a lower risk of stroke.

Another study found chocolate may also [prevent memory decline](#). This is important as researchers look for ways to prevent Alzheimer's Disease.

Cholesterol Lowering Power of Chocolate

Dark chocolate consumption contains compounds that raise your HDL, or "good" cholesterol. A study in [The Journal of Nutrition](#) found a box of Valentine's Day chocolates may also lower your LDL or "bad" cholesterol.

Researchers say the results of the studies do not open the door to eating excessive amounts of chocolate because the sugar and fat could lead to weight gain. But it appears, in moderation, chocolate does the body some good—especially dark chocolate.

So, if your significant other shows up to your door with a big box of Valentine's Day chocolates, you don't have to feel 100% guilty. You can take comfort in knowing there are some health benefits buried in all of that chocolatey goodness. And if you're looking for more healthy eating tips, download our guide: "[Five Ways to Eat Healthier](#)" today.

* <https://blog.partnersforyourhealth.com/blog/valentines-day-chocolates>