Q: Is it true that chocolate is actually good for me?

A: Yes, chocolate actually does have health benefits. However, before you grab a candy bar or brownie, it’s important to know that some forms of chocolate provide more benefit to your body than others.

Dark chocolate seems to have the most health benefits because of the high flavonoid content. Flavonoids are antioxidants found in plant-based foods that provide protective benefits for the body. Research has shown that the flavonoids found in chocolate can help decrease plaque buildup in your arteries, raise good cholesterol, and reduce blood pressure in people with high blood pressure.

Processing chocolate has a big impact on its flavonoid content. Generally, when chocolate is being made, the cocoa is roasted to get rid of the strong bitter taste. As the cocoa is being processed, the flavonoids are lost along with the strong flavor. Dark chocolate is the least processed chocolate, so it still contains many flavonoids.

Research has not yet found the exact serving size of chocolate needed for you to receive the health benefits mentioned here. With that said, you no longer have to feel guilty for enjoying a small piece of dark chocolate every once in awhile. Remember that moderation is key; chocolate does contain fat and added sugar, both of which provide extra calories that could promote unwanted weight gain.

Source: http://www.clevelandclinic.org/heartcenter/pub/guide/prevention/nutrition/chocolate.htm

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