

## Dark Chocolate Benefits<sup>1</sup>

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I live with a family of self-proclaimed “chocoholics.” My husband and daughter love everything chocolate. If you or your family members love chocolate, you know it's hard to deny a craving. Still, most of us can't help but be concerned about how something so sweet might adversely impact our family's health. Chocolate lovers, even those at risk for developing type 2 diabetes or hypertension, may now have a legitimate reason to indulge in this culinary pleasure.

A recent study reported in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* tested the effects of dark and white chocolate on healthy adults to determine whether either type played a role in blood pressure and insulin sensitivity. They concluded that dark chocolate can indeed help reduce blood pressure and insulin resistance. White chocolate did not provide these health benefits. The effects of dark chocolate are due to flavanols, antioxidant compounds also found in many fruits and vegetables that have been shown to lower risk of heart disease. Flavanols make dark chocolate in moderation a great solution to satisfy your sweet tooth!

Keep in mind that although dark chocolate has health benefits, most chocolate bars are high in saturated fat, so moderation is key. Also, eating dark chocolate cannot substitute for everyday healthy food choices. Nor can chocolate replace regular exercise or medications that have been prescribed by your physician. Still, it's nice to know you can indulge in your chocolate cravings every so often without feeling guilty about it.

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## References

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