

Balancing Act!

How to Make Chocolate a Healthy Indulgence

From *Health* magazine



The benefits of being a chocolate lover

This ultimate feel-good food keeps your heart healthy, mood up, and body in great shape. Find out what all that this natural ingredient can do for you.

Heart helper

A study in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that people who ate dark chocolate had less of a protein that indicates inflammation, which can lead to a heart attack.

Mood booster

There's a good reason we crave chocolate when we're down. Its tryptophan ups mood-lifting serotonin in the brain, says Leah Sherman, a naturopathic physician in Portland, Oregon. One study found that even the taste, texture, and smell make us happy.

Skin soother

For a spa treat, try this bath from Lauren Cox's *Eco Beauty*: Combine 2 cups chocolate milk, 2 tablespoons mild liquid soap, and 1 tablespoon honey; pour mixture into the bathtub. The chocolate milk's lactic acid and antioxidants smooth and soften your skin.

Cravings buster

University of Copenhagen researchers found that subjects felt fuller and craved fewer sweet, salty, and fatty foods when they snacked on chocolate (yes!). Be sure to choose dark chocolate: Its low glycemic index steadies blood sugar levels, cutting cravings.

Finally, for a fun change of pace – Try a Chocotini!

Chocolate martini recipe from The Peninsula Chicago:

1 oz vanilla vodka, such as Stolichnaya

1 1/2 ounces dark chocolate liqueur, such as Godiva

1 1/2 ounces plain soy or skim milk

1/2 ounce chocolate syrup

Combine all ingredients in a shaker and shake vigorously. Pour mixture into a martini glass, and serve.

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