

Current health benefits of chocolate consolidated into a single resource.

The Chocolate Therapist: A User's Guide to the Extraordinary Health Benefits of Chocolate

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PRESCRIPTIONS

It's finally time to apply all of this information to your health. The recommended chocolate bars noted after each of the prescriptions are suggestions and not requirements. Feel free to replace your favorite bar wherever it's appropriate.

Allergies

Prescription: Take 2 squares dark or milk organic chocolate, every 6 hours as needed while drinking Yogi® Ginger Tea. Do not exceed 12 squares in any 24 hour period. Children under 12 should take half the dose.

Recommended bar: Dagoba® milk chocolate with ginger and chai or Dagoba® dark chocolate with lavender and blueberry

Supporting Evidence

Chocolate contains theobromine which has recently been shown to offer the same cough suppressing advantages as codeine (see prescription for “cough”). The ginger in both the tea and the recommended bar will offer significant relief as well. Ginger contains anti-inflammatory properties and has long been used by traditional healers to help control a variety of health problems including allergies and other respiratory conditions. It's a natural antihistamine as well as a decongestant, and it dilates constricted bronchial tubes offering relief to the sufferer.

Allergic to chocolate? In a study of 81 people who believed they were allergic to chocolate, researchers found only one person with an actual chocolate allergy. According to a prominent allergist at the National Jewish Medical Research Center in Denver, in thirty years of allergy testing for chocolate they found less than thirty-five cases of actual chocolate allergies. It's quite possible that people try to convince themselves that they're allergic to chocolate merely as an excuse to stay away from it--certainly a self-torture we should avoid at every expense. Of course if you're positively allergic to chocolate, you may want to pass this book on to a friend.

Anemia

Prescription: 4 squares dark chocolate with almonds taken on an empty stomach, or any other time you feel like taking it, up to a maximum of 16 squares in a given day. Optional: 10 additional almonds (without chocolate) taken at any time.

Recommended bar: Tropical Source® toasted almond dark chocolate bar

Supporting Evidence

Anemia is a condition in which the level of red blood cells in the bloodstream falls to a very low level. Without enough red cells, the body is unable to carry the oxygen needed to maintain healthy tissues and organs. Iron helps build red blood cells, and a deficiency in this mineral can lead to anemia. Eating foods rich in iron can help reduce the possibility of becoming anemic.

A quality bar of dark chocolate provides approximately 7.5% of your daily iron requirement. Adding 3.5 oz of almonds to the mix brings the total up to 29%, and almonds perform double duty. Not only do they boost the daily iron percentage but they also contain copper (approximately 1.15mg per 100g), which, when combined with the vitamins and iron in chocolate, acts as a catalyst for the formation of new blood cells. If you're really feeling industrious, melt the chocolate and almonds together (on very low heat) in an iron pot. Research has shown that cooking in iron pots raises the iron content of the food.

Anti-Wrinkle Assistance

Prescription: 6 squares dark organic chocolate taken one at a time with a glass of red wine. Enjoy at home with an invitation-only spa party with the girls, guys or both. Apply organic dark chocolate mask, as instructed on the box. Entertaining movie optional. Repeat monthly.

Recommendations: Godiva® sugar free dark chocolate bar; Ecco Bella™ organic dark chocolate mask

Supporting Evidence

The recent explosion of chocolate-based skincare products confirms that chocolate's use is no longer limited to the stomach. It's now acceptable for the face and body as well.

Perhaps you're questioning the logic behind applying chocolate to the face as it's rumored to cause acne. But just like everything else in life, correct application is the key. Here are just a few of the facts, quoted directly from the recommended Ecco Bella™ mask box: "...this chocolate mask treatment is naturally pure and rich in iron, magnesium, vitamins and antioxidants.....these nutrients nourish and cleanse your skin while leaving it softer and smoother than ever." When you participate with a group of friends, you'll get the fabulous benefit of laughing hysterically when you see how lovely everyone looks in their fresh and skin-friendly dark chocolate mask.

After the cleansing mask, you might want to apply Origins new cocoa therapy™ Deeply nourishing body butter. Just like the mask, this product is loaded with vitamins, minerals and more wrinkle-fighting antioxidants. After testing their product on 53 volunteers, Origins reported that 74% of the participants said they actually felt happier after experiencing it for just 10 minutes. It appears that some of chocolate's benefits can be enjoyed without so much as single calorie gain! The product also contains the aromatic and enchanting scents of vanilla, ginger and orange, all specifically added to ensure your state of relaxed euphoria.

When you choose the recommended bar, you'll enjoy Godiva's® wonderful sugar-free dark chocolate. It's certainly acceptable to choose regular Godiva® chocolate as well. Just keep in mind that the darker your selection, the more health benefits you'll receive. Either way, you'll be getting a delicious dose of wrinkle-fighting antioxidants. Now off you go to the spa.

Antioxidant Assistance

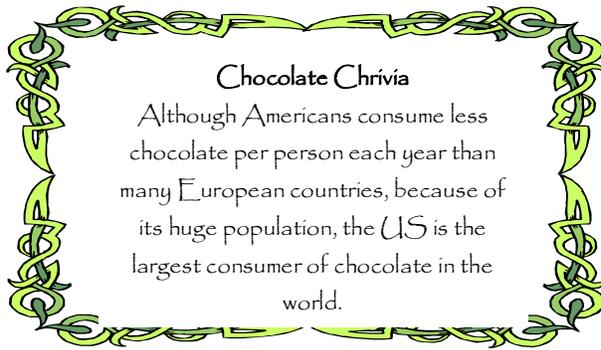
Prescription: 8 squares dark organic chocolate taken throughout the day; repeat daily as you wish, up to a maximum of 2.5 oz of chocolate in a 24 hour period.

Recommended bar: Terra Nostra™ organic intense dark chocolate: 73% cocoa

Supporting Evidence

Antioxidants, polyphenols and catechins: All powerful aides to the body and all abundantly available in dark chocolate. Antioxidants assist the body by working against oxidation (the breakdown of tissues). Polyphenols are naturally occurring chemicals heavily present in green tea and are considered to be very powerful antioxidants. They've been touted for their aide in preventing heart disease and cancer. Catechins, a class of polyphenols, also have very potent antioxidant capabilities. Like polyphenols, catechins are generally found in green tea, but chocolate lovers will rejoice in the fact that a bar of dark chocolate contains twice as many catechins as a cup of green tea.

Eating a high content dark chocolate bar is like swallowing a snack stuffed with these powerful antioxidants. Whether you're counting flavinoids, catechins or polyphenols, gram for gram dark chocolate comes out above or near the top every time.



Arthritis

Prescription: 4 squares dark organic chocolate with or without hazelnuts every 4 hours, as needed to reduce pain and increase chocolate euphoria. Take with or without meals. Maximum intake of 12 squares in any 24 hour period.

Recommended bar: Rapunzel's semisweet bar with hazelnuts

Supporting Evidence

Scientists have recently discovered that polyphenols, heavily present in chocolate, significantly reduce the possibility of getting some forms of arthritis. Polyphenols contain anti-inflammatory properties and that could help explain the connection between chocolate consumption and reduced arthritic inflammation. A bar with nuts is recommended because nuts assist with calcium absorption and prevent the body from becoming calcium deficient. Studies have shown that arthritic conditions worsen where calcium deficiencies are present.

Asthma

Prescription: Take one half of a dark organic chocolate bar with one cup of peppermint tea. Read a good book, repeat as necessary until you feel better. Maximum one bar per day.

Recommended Bar: Organic Swiss dark chocolate bar.

Supporting Evidence

Asthma is a respiratory disorder generally thought to be caused by an allergic reaction involving immune system dysfunction. When under attack, the body releases histamines to combat foreign substances like dust, pollen and some types of food. In an over-responsive body, histamines cause an excessive rush of blood and lymph fluid to the affected area, causing an inflammation of the lungs and impeding breathing.

Chocolate contains a chemical called proanthocyanidin which is an anti-inflammatory. Proanthocyanidin is used in vitamins and medicines that are specially formulated for assisting in arthritis, another inflammatory disease. The proanthocyanidin in chocolate actually helps block

the body's release of histamines which can help reduce the side effects of an asthmatic allergic reaction. The small amount of caffeine in chocolate may be beneficial as well. Caffeinated foods and beverages can help dilate bronchial tubes and make breathing easier.

Peppermint tea helps clear breathing passages as well. Peppermint oil has been used for centuries as a decongestant because it relaxes nasal passages and even reduces pain. It's regularly found in cough syrups, ointments, nasal decongestants and inhalants. But why go to all that medicinal trouble? You can enjoy many of the same benefits by simply eating a mint chocolate bar and drinking a cup of mint tea.

Blood Sugar Control

Prescription: 4 squares dark organic chocolate with or without almonds, hazelnuts, or pecans, taken with 8 oz. water or skim milk. Take after the lunch and dinner meals.

Recommended bar: Dagoba® organic milk chocolate with espresso and cinnamon, or Chocolove® dark chocolate w/almonds and cherries.

Supporting Evidence

There's certainly no way to advocate the use of chocolate to control blood sugar. However, there's an appropriate time to eat chocolate that won't do much to affect your triglycerides, or blood sugar levels. While it's true that chocolate supposedly tastes better on an empty stomach (see Proper Chocolate Consumption), it's not the ideal way to eat chocolate when attempting to keep blood sugar stabilized. The key is to eat it after a meal, preferably where you've eaten a healthy portion of protein (20 grams or more). Protein acts as a stabilizer for blood sugar because it's absorbed into the bloodstream very slowly. It balances foods that cause blood sugar to rise such as sugars and processed carbohydrates. And although a 100g chocolate bar contains four grams of protein, you're still better off eating chocolate after a protein-rich meal.

Chocolate also contains chromium which is a mineral associated with controlling blood sugar. Adding chromium to the daily diet has proven to increase glucose metabolism in as little as 4-6 weeks. It may even assist with increasing your ability to properly metabolize cholesterol.

Nuts also help keep blood sugar levels low. Nuts contain fat, and like protein, fat helps reduce the rate at which sugar is absorbed into the bloodstream. If you had a choice between eating a bowl of processed cereal (any brand) or an organic dark chocolate bar, the chocolate bar would be a much healthier option when considering blood sugar control. Nearly every processed cereal raises blood sugar substantially, while a chocolate bar with nuts comes in quite low at 34 on the glycemic index scale. (See appendix D for a brief description of the glycemic index and how it works.)

Although the recommended Dagoba® bar doesn't contain nuts, it would be a good idea to consume a handful of almonds or some other type of nuts along with the bar for the benefits listed above. I recommend this Dagoba® bar because it contains cinnamon. Recent research on cinnamon indicates that it helps lower blood sugar. The study, performed on 60 individuals with type 2 diabetes, confirmed that 1/4 tsp of cinnamon given twice daily reduced both blood sugar levels and bad cholesterols.

Finally, both chocolate and cinnamon contain proanthocyanidin, the ingredient that appears to activate the insulin receptor in cells. More than one study has confirmed that cinnamon enhances insulin action and may be beneficial in controlling blood glucose levels and diabetes.

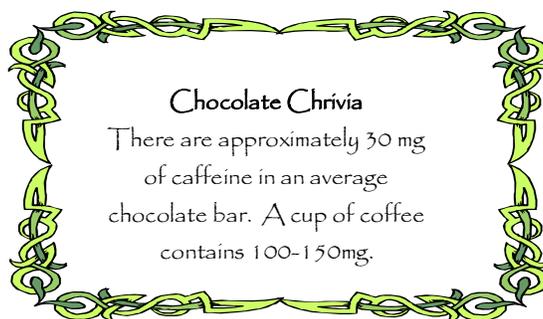
Caffeine withdrawal

Prescription: 1.2 oz bar dark organic chocolate any time of day with a cup of coffee or caffeinated beverage of your choice. Limit one chocolate bar per day.

Recommended bar: Newman's Own® organic sweet dark chocolate with espresso—available in both 1.2 oz and 2.8 oz sizes

Supporting Evidence

Chocolate has long been credited as a pick-me-up food because it contains caffeine. But it's most likely the sugar, endorphins, vitamins and minerals in chocolate that do the picking up and not the caffeine. The amount of caffeine in chocolate is insignificant. Unless you're eating plenty of high quality unsweetened baking chocolate, you won't really be able to use chocolate to help stay awake. For that quick pick-me-up, it's better to include a caffeinated beverage as prescribed. The recommended bar comes with its own added espresso assuring that you have adequate energy for your next endeavor, whether it's shopping, driving cross country or cycling 20 miles on the lunch hour.



Cancer

Prescription: 1/2 dark organic chocolate bar with or without almonds, taken daily for the rest of your life.

Recommended bar: Chocolove® dark chocolate with almonds and cherries

Supporting Evidence

Flavonoids are highly protective antioxidants that provide a powerful boost to the immune system. Not surprisingly flavonoids are plentiful in dark chocolate. At the University of Hawaii's Cancer Research Center, volunteers whose diets contained the highest consumption of flavonoids showed a 40-50% reduction in lung cancer. In another study in Finland, a 24-year investigation of 10,000 people confirmed that those who regularly ate the highest quantity of flavonoids showed a 20% reduction in developing all types of cancer. And at Georgetown University, a study is currently underway to test the theory that flavonoids isolated from chocolate might be used as an anti-cancer drug.

The research on antioxidants and their ability to fight cancer is abundant. Gram for gram, chocolate has a very high antioxidant content. It's an excellent choice when considering snack options to help the body fight toxins and prevent the breakdown of healthy cells. If you choose the recommended bar, you'll also gain value from the almonds. In a study done at the University of California, Davis, researchers determined that almond consumption may provide some protection against the development of colon cancer in rats. Researchers believe that colon cancer is a diet-based disease, and a diet high in fiber (present in almonds) helps reduce the possibility of developing this type of cancer.

Cavities

Prescription: 4 oz dark organic chocolate taken after meals and prior to brushing teeth. Chew sugar-free gum afterward to help clean teeth. Smile.

Recommended bar: Terra Nostra™ organic dark truffle

Supporting Evidence

Although chocolate contains sugar, it also contains phosphates and other minerals that inhibit bacteria growth formed by the sugars that promote tooth decay. The Eastman Dental Center in Rochester, New York, concluded that "...milk chocolate is one of the snack foods least likely to contribute to tooth decay."

Research also suggests that the length of time food spends in the mouth is more likely to contribute to its cavity-producing capacity and not the amount of sugar it contains. Foods like chocolate, juice and pop all exit the mouth much quicker than cookies, breads and chewier foods. The recommended bar, a truffle, is softer and will exit the mouth quicker than regular dark chocolate.

Constipation

Prescription: Microwave 1 dark organic chocolate bar on a plate for 2 minutes. Stir, then microwave for 1 additional minute or until chocolate is melted. (You may have to microwave and stir a few times to get smooth consistency.) Mix in 10 almonds, stir and allow to cool. Take 1/4 of the bar every hour with hot water or hot tea until problem is alleviated, not to exceed one bar of chocolate in a 24 hour period.

Recommended bar: Cloud Nine™ premium dark chocolate with espresso

Supporting Evidence

One hundred grams of chocolate contains 15g of fiber which assists the body in eliminating toxic waste. There are also compounds in chocolate that have actually been shown to stimulate contractions of the intestinal canal. But to get the maximum benefit, I've recommended a healthy dose of almonds to compliment the chocolate prescription.

According to the California Almond Board, eating 11-15 almonds before bed will help cleanse the stomach by morning. One ounce of almonds contains 3 grams of fiber. With this in mind, the prescription calls for a chocolate/almond nut bark with plenty of almonds for maximum benefits. If you choose the recommended bar, you'll also get minimal amounts of espresso. While espresso isn't normally used as a relief medication for constipation, some people report that coffee helps assist with the task at hand. However, some research advises staying away from coffee when constipated. If you find that coffee aggravates your condition, choose a bar without espresso.

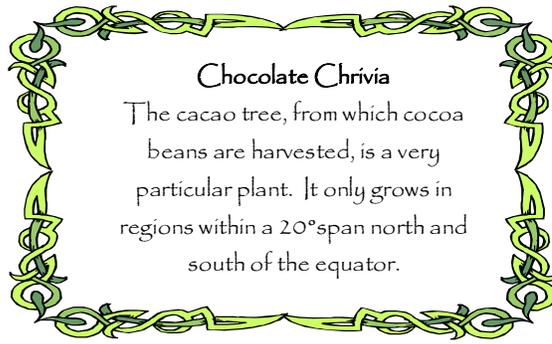
Cough

Prescription: 1 cup milk, 2 tsp dark chocolate cocoa powder, 1 tsp sugar; Mix together in a cup and microwave for 1 minute. Take as needed, with a bowl of chicken soup if preferred. Refrain from working or going to school if applicable, for at least one day.

Recommended cocoa: Rapunzel 100% organic cocoa powder

Supporting Evidence

Chocolate contains a stimulant called theobromine. The National Heart and Lung Institute in London recently conducted a study comparing theobromine to codeine (a popular ingredient in cough medicine) for its effectiveness in suppressing coughs. The theobromine proved to be equally as effective as the codeine. Combined with its other wonderful antioxidant and euphoric inducing components, home made chocolate milk is an excellent choice when nursing a cold.



Depression

Prescription: 4 squares dark chocolate with dried fruit, taken every hour as needed, not to exceed a maximum of 2.5 oz. in any 24 hour period. Read an uplifting novel and repeat positive affirmations between doses.

Recommended bar: Endangered Species™ dark chocolate with raspberries

Supporting Evidence

Chocolate has been reported to stimulate the secretion of several endorphins that are beneficial to a state of well-being. Eating chocolate may even produce the same pleasurable sensation as running several miles. Chocolate contains both serotonin and tryptophan, neurotransmitters that act as anti-depressants in the brain. In addition, two other chemicals in chocolate, caffeine and theobromine, exhibit mood lifting effects. It's not advised to replace anti-depressant medication with chocolate, but it's acceptable to add the prescription to your program for maximum benefits.

If you select the recommended bar, you'll benefit from the dried raspberries as well. Studies comparing different populations have concluded that eating fruit may help reduce the possibility of developing a host of problems including diabetes, cataracts, heart failure, indigestion, PMS and strokes. Although none of these ailments is specifically depression, avoiding them by eating healthier foods provides considerably less reason to be depressed.

Note on prescribed positive affirmations: Make sure they're positive! Affirmations should be free of negative words.

Not acceptable: I won't eat more than the prescribed chocolate for my condition.

Acceptable: I easily enjoy the right amount of chocolate for my condition.

Energy Loss

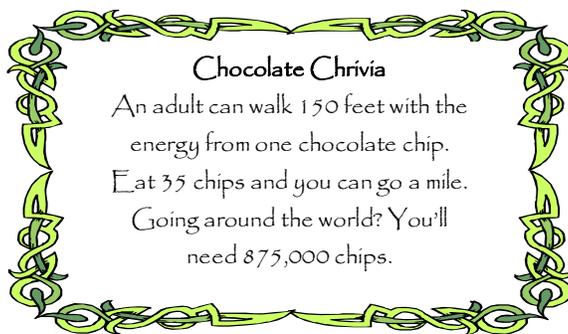
Prescription: 2 squares dark organic chocolate with dried berries or other dried fruit, taken after lunch, every two hours until dinner time. After taking chocolate, take 10 deep breaths and hold for four seconds each, exhale. Maximum of 12 squares in a 24 hour period.

Recommended bar: Terra Nostra™ dark organic chocolate with raisins & pecans or Chocolive® dark organic chocolate with orange peel.

Supporting Evidence

The case for chocolate as an energy source lands on both sides of the fence. On one hand, chocolate contains sugar that the body quickly absorbs for energy use. But it also contains fat, which slows the absorption of these sugars into the blood. Picking up your energy level requires a quick infusion of sugar, so take into account what's been added to your chocolate when attempting to increase energy levels.

“Snickers™ really satisfies.” This campaign has been so successful many people I know won't even ski or bike without a Snickers™ tucked into their jacket. But consider eating dried fruits with chocolate rather than caramel and nougat as an energy source. Approximately six pounds of fruit creates just one pound of dried fruit, and caloric and vitamin value are fully retained. The body readily absorbs the sugars in fruit, both glucose and fructose, making them an ideal choice for replenishing energy reserves. The high fiber content of fruit promotes regularity and helps keep the body free from toxic waste build up.



Flatulence

Prescription: 1/2 bar (1.5 oz) dark chocolate with mint. Drink one cup mint tea, take 4 mint Tic-tacs™ if needed for emergency situations.

Recommended bar: Tropical Source® mint dark chocolate

Supporting Evidence

While chocolate alone might not curb outbursts, the blend of chocolate with mint may be just the right combination. Mint is a stimulant that has been used for centuries as a digestive aide to counteract spasms in the digestive tract. It stimulates the flow of bile and promotes gastric

secretions as well, adding to the overall digestive flow. Be sure to follow the entire prescription for an increased level of comfort, especially prior to a business meeting.

Food Cravings

Prescription: 1 square milk chocolate, 1 square dark chocolate, one cup hot cocoa made with real cocoa powder and sugar (See Appendix C for recipe). Repeat as needed until cravings subside, up to a maximum of 2 oz. of chocolate per day.

Recommended bars: Dagoba® milk chocolate with espresso and cinnamon or Chocolove® extra dark chocolate.

Supporting Evidence

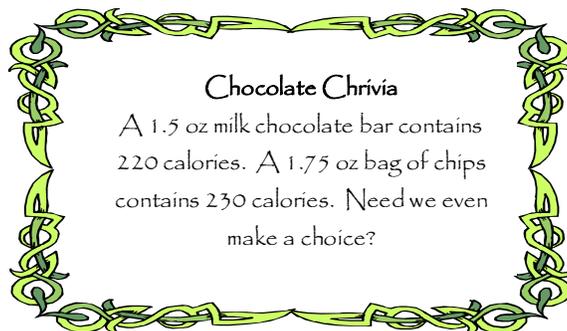
This is hardly a surprising statistic--more than half of all food cravings are said to involve chocolate. Another “astounding” fact--chocolate is the number one food women crave. And of those who declared chocolate to be their top craving, 75% stated that *only* chocolate would curb their craving. In other words, denying a craving or trying to curb it by eating something else isn't likely to work. It's better to cave into a craving and not feel guilty about it than it is to eat hundreds of additional calories trying to avoid it. Not only will it provide peace of mind, but it will keep the body healthier as well.

For example, if you eat 500 calories of sugar free cookies and low-carb chips but still want chocolate, you're over the limit by 500 calories and still left with the original craving. According to Debra Waterhouse, author of *Why Women Need Chocolate*, a chocolate craving can be satisfied by consuming just one Hershey's kiss (25 calories). Even a 10 kiss/250 calorie splurge is better than a binge on everything in sight while trying to avoid a craving.

Chocolate's perfectly balanced blend of sugar and fat uniquely affects food cravings. The body contains an amino acid peptide called galanin that stimulates the appetite. Because chocolate contains fat, it curbs the affect of galanin, reducing the need to eat. People also biologically crave fat when endorphins are low. Consumption of chocolate helps release both endorphins and serotonin into the brain. The endorphins transmit energy and feelings of euphoria, and serotonin evokes calm and mood stability.

If that's not enough to have you running to the nearest chocolate store, cocoa also contains more than 400 distinct flavor compounds. It's conceivable that by eating just one little piece of chocolate all of your extraneous cravings can be contained. In a study done on self-professed chocoholics, volunteers were given a variety of chocolates--milk, white, plain cocoa powder and a placebo. The only one that effectively satisfied the craving was milk chocolate. (They were not given dark chocolate.)

So please make a note when addressing cravings--it's best to just go right to the source of the problem. Attempting to avoid it may cause you to consume every morsel of food within a six mile radius! Follow the prescription and end the craving before monumental damage is done.



Going to the Dark Side

A special section for those who need assistance converting from milk to dark chocolate.

Prescription: 2 pieces basic milk chocolate, followed directly by 2 squares high quality milk chocolate, followed directly by 2 squares high quality dark chocolate. Use guidelines in “Proper Chocolate Consumption” to insure maximum effectiveness, rinsing with a high quality merlot between chocolates. Take after the evening meal.

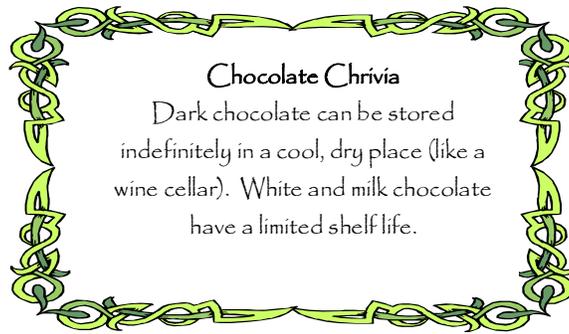
Recommended chocolate: 2 Hershey's kisses, Green & Black's milk chocolate with almonds, Chocolove® dark cherry almond

Supporting Evidence

Although it tastes delicious, milk chocolate is not the ideal choice for those who wish to obtain the significant benefits from chocolate. It contains far too many fats and sugars. Milk chocolate is like fried zucchini—the initial product in its raw form is wonderful, but by the time it gets to your mouth it's so heavily disguised it's virtually unrecognizable. If you follow this simple procedure, it won't take long to acquire a true appreciation for the darker delicacy.

The first step is to move from standard quality to high quality milk chocolate. I recommend Green & Black's as the high quality milk chocolate because it contains a higher percentage of cocoa than the average milk chocolate bar and it tastes fabulous.

For the dark chocolate, I recommend Chocolove® because their dark chocolate tastes wonderful and it's easy on the palate. This brand also offers a complete assortment of two milk and eight dark bars with the amount of cocoa they contain listed in order on the back of every bar. To simplify the entire process, use Chocolove® from start to finish to bring about the conversion. Ultimately you'll reach a point where you truly enjoy dark chocolate. Then there'll be no reason to compromise your health while enjoying your passion.



Headache

Prescription: 1.6 oz dark organic chocolate, taken with chocolate milk made from cocoa powder and the sweetener of your choice (see recipe in Appendix C). Consume directly after a meal. Lie down for 10 minutes after consumption, elevate feet, breathe deeply.

Recommended cocoa: Ghirardelli cocoa powder for hot cocoa; Cloud Nine™ dark chocolate with raspberry chocolate bar.

Supporting Evidence

Consumption of dark chocolate raises the level of nitric oxide in the blood, a chemical that dilates blood vessels and allows more blood to pass through the veins. Aspirin works much the same way in the brain by expanding constricted blood vessels to reduce pain. But do you have to eat 10 chocolate bars to benefit? According to Carl Keen of the University of California nutrition department, drinking 25g of semisweet chocolate affects the blood as much as consuming an 81-miligram dose of aspirin (approximately 1/3 aspirin). Even if you don't have a headache, it's OK to play it safe and take a couple of chocolate squares after dinner just to make sure your blood is flowing.

Some studies advised against eating chocolate for those prone to headaches, especially migraines. Chocolate is rumored to act as a trigger for headaches in some cases. But it's quite possible that something else is the actual cause of the headaches in many of those studies and not the cocoa. In a double blind study at the University of Pittsburg, subjects were given chocolate and carob (a food that tastes like chocolate that doesn't contain cocoa) over a two week period. The results demonstrated little difference in chocolate and carob as migraine triggers. In fact, the researchers determined that chocolate does not appear to trigger headaches. More than one study has come to this same conclusion. Once again, when considering the research, a very dark chocolate bar is probably the best choice because it contains more nitric-oxide releasing cocoa.

Heartbreak

Prescription: Unlimited dark organic chocolate squares as needed. Call friends in the morning. Avoid sappy movies about lovers, sad or melancholy music, depressing books and rain.

Recommended bar: Ghirardelli sweet dark baking bar

Supporting Evidence

Admittedly, a prescription to eat baking chocolate is extreme. But a broken heart calls for drastic measures and the darker the better. Chocolate contains a very powerful amphetamine called phenylethylamine (PEA). PEA triggers a release of natural opiates in the brain and induces a feeling of bliss. PEA is also the same chemical the brain emits when you experience the rush of falling in love. And not surprisingly, there's even a substantial increase of PEA in the brain during orgasm.

Chocolate offers up quite a collection of positives--natural opiates, the feeling of falling in love and orgasmic bliss. Clearly it satisfies at least a few of our basic love needs without the arguments or frustration of trying to understand the opposite sex. And at a trivial few dollars or less per bar, it's a superb value when compared to \$150+/hour for therapy. It's no mystery as to why it's a good idea to pamper a lovesick heart with a chocolate one.

Heart Disease

Prescription: 8 squares dark chocolate with almonds (or nut of your choice) for 3 days in a row after lunch, one day off, repeat as needed.

Recommended bar: Endangered Species™ dark organic chocolate with coconut and macadamia nuts or Tropical Source® toasted almond dark chocolate.

Supporting Evidence

Cocoa contains phytochemicals called flavinoids, a powerful type of antioxidant. Flavonoids aren't just found in chocolate--they're also found in fruits, vegetables, tea and even red wines. Recent research suggests that antioxidants help block artery damage caused by free radicals. They also block platelet aggregation in the blood, reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke. Not long ago red wine received a favorable nod as an excellent source of antioxidants. Yet a cup of hot chocolate made with two tablespoons of cocoa contains almost twice as many antioxidants as a glass of red wine.

At the University of California, researchers fed 1.6 oz. of dark chocolate per day to 22 volunteers over the course of two weeks. Half received the actual chocolate and the other half a placebo. Those who received the chocolate showed significantly more relaxation in their blood vessels than those who didn't. Better blood flow through the arteries means less clogging.

Even the Journal of American Dietetic Association reported that chocolate benefits the heart because it contains antioxidants and flavinoids. These substances help prevent cholesterol from building up in the arteries, reducing the risk of heart disease.

Adding nuts to chocolate, as prescribed, also assists the heart. Nuts are high in both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats--the “good” fats. Consuming nuts has actually been linked to a decrease in risk for heart attacks. A recent study at Tufts University in Boston found that the combination of a phytochemical (or antioxidant) found in the skin of almonds, combined with the vitamin E actually contained in almonds, protected LDL cholesterols (bad fats) from oxidation. Eating nuts has also been shown to increase HDL’s or “good fats” in the bloodstream. The net result is more good fats and less bad fats.

High Blood Pressure

Prescription: 4-8 squares dark organic chocolate, taken after dinner with a glass of red wine. Listen to baroque style music (60 beats per minute or slower) with both feet kicked up on the couch for a minimum of 10 minutes before proceeding with your evening plans.

Recommended bar: Dagoba® organic dark chocolate with lime & macadamia nuts

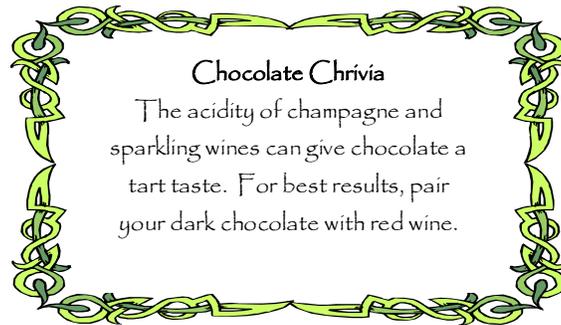
Supporting Evidence

Salt and high blood pressure--a cause/effect relationship that has been around for years. Yet a study done on the Kuna people, a tribe living off the coast of Panama, discovered that despite a high salt diet, their blood pressure levels were extremely low. The chocolate connection? The Kuna drink about five cups of chocolate per day. A follow up study done by Norman Hollenburg at Harvard University confirmed the possible link. Hollenburg fed volunteers both milk and dark chocolate. Those who consumed the equivalent amount of dark chocolate as the Kuna people showed a marked increase in nitric oxide in their blood. Nitric oxide relaxes and dilates blood vessels, reducing blood pressure by allowing more blood to pass through the veins.

In another interesting study, a team of Greek researchers tested artery constriction in a group of volunteers. After fasting for five hours, half of the group received 100g of chocolate (3.5 oz bar) for a snack and the other half received nothing. The researches tested both blood flow and pulse of the subjects for three hours by ultrasound. The study showed that the chocolate consumer’s arteries dilated 20% more than those who had not eaten chocolate. The highest dilation occurred after three hours (the end of the test), suggesting that the benefits continued to increase even after the test was over. Once again, higher dilation of blood vessels allows more blood to pass through the veins and reduces blood pressure.

If you choose the recommended Dagoba® bar with lime and macadamia nuts, you’ll benefit even more. Lime has been used for its motivating and morale boosting qualities in aromatherapy.

And macadamia nuts are low in salt and high in mono-unsaturated “good fats,” which helps to lower cholesterol.



High Cholesterol

Prescription: ½ bar high grade (60%+ cocoa) dark chocolate with nuts as part of your daily intake, taken with your afternoon latte and a whole grain bagel or crackers.

Recommended bar: Endangered Species™ dark chocolate with cranberries and almonds

Supporting Evidence

Eating chocolate on a regular basis may actually lower your cholesterol. While chocolate contains fat, most of it is considered healthy. Over 65% of the fats in chocolate are of the “good fat” variety. Consuming high quality chocolate has also proven to reduce the “stickiness” of platelets in the blood. This effectively lowers the level of LDL or “bad” cholesterol and allows the blood to run more efficiently through the body.

A typical dark chocolate bar contains approximately 11g of fat, more than half of it saturated. But saturated fat is actually losing ground as a “bad” fat. A study that reviewed the diets of both the Masai and Eskimo tribes showed that despite their extremely high intake of saturated fats (in meat, beef, milk and whale blubber), heart disease is virtually unknown to their cultures. The exact type of saturated fat seems to make all the difference, and chocolate primarily contains the favored fats.

A breakdown of the fat in a dark chocolate bar reveals that four grams are made up of oleic acid--the same fat found in olive oil and considered a healthy fat. Another part of the saturated fat is stearic acid, which is also converted to oleic acid by the liver. Only 25% of the fat in chocolate is palmitic acid, considered “bad fat.” At the University of Pennsylvania, a study compared subjects who were given cocoa butter to another group who was given regular butter. Those who were fed cocoa butter showed no increase in cholesterol levels, while those who were given regular butter showed an increase. Despite the fact that chocolate contains a very small amount of unhealthy fat, chocolate’s cholesterol friendly fats outweigh the effects of its few bad fats.

In a study conducted at Pennsylvania State University, researchers had a group of volunteers add 16g of dark chocolate and 22g of cocoa powder to their daily diet. All of the volunteers had improved cholesterol levels. Even the “bad” LDL cholesterol appeared to be more resistant to oxidation by free radicals, making it less dangerous to the heart. In a similar study, researchers gave volunteers a milk chocolate bar for a snack instead of a high carbohydrate alternative (bagel, chips, etc.). The subjects’ level of HDL (good fats) increased while the bad cholesterol remained unchanged, suggesting that cholesterol levels can improve by eating chocolate. Had the researchers used high quality dark chocolate, the results would have been even more impressive.

Adding nuts to chocolate also assists the body’s “good” cholesterol count. Research has confirmed that people who eat nuts on a regular basis have significantly lower levels of heart disease. Almonds and walnuts are particularly healthful. In fact, some studies have shown that eating just one ounce of almonds per day can actually lower cholesterol levels. However, even pistachios and hazelnuts have been reported to help lower cholesterol, so take your medicine!

Hypertension

Prescription: 4 squares dark chocolate, taken with 4 ounces of water, not to exceed three doses of chocolate daily (more water is acceptable, of course).

Recommended bar: Endangered Species™ smooth dark chocolate

Supporting Evidence

Cocoa is one of the best natural sources of magnesium. Researchers have discovered a link between deficiency in this trace mineral and hypertension, heart disease and even PMS. Meeting the daily magnesium requirement has been shown to be beneficial for both the cardiovascular system and hypertension. A 3 oz bar contains 100 mg of magnesium, approximately 25% of the daily magnesium requirement. (Refer to the Vitamin Deficiency section where you’ll find the complete nutrient contents of a dark chocolate bar.)

Immune Deficiency

Prescription: 3 squares dark organic chocolate; one cup hot cocoa made with cocoa powder and sweetener of your choice (see Appendix C), taken whenever you feel an illness coming on. Optional, 1000 mg vitamin C with dosage.

Recommendations: Endangered Species™ dark chocolate with tangerine essence. Rapunzel 100% organic baking cocoa powder.

Supporting Evidence

A study in Japan recently confirmed that chocolate contains phenolics. These powerful compounds have been shown to boost the immune system when tested in human blood samples. Like antioxidants, phenolics also have a proven ability to suppress body-damaging free radicals. But immune system support from chocolate doesn't end there. Dark chocolate also contains a plentiful supply of antioxidants—three times more than blueberries, a food with very high levels of antioxidants. Antioxidants assist the immune system by helping the body maintain healthy, disease-fighting cells. If you choose the recommended bar you'll also enjoy the essence of tangerine, a citrus fruit packed with vitamin C, another immune system booster.

Lack of Sexual Desire

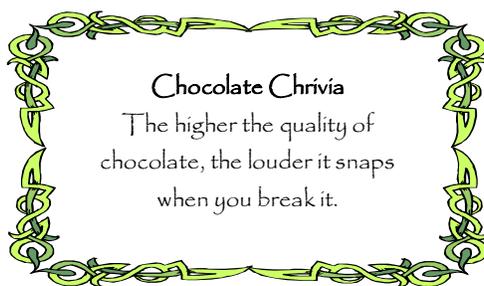
Prescription: One entire bar of dark organic chocolate, shared with a partner in bed while reading poetry by candle light. Optional activities when finished medicating.

Recommended bar: Chocolove® dark chocolate with almonds and cherries

Supporting Evidence

Not surprisingly, the research for arousing sexual desire is almost the same as that found in the *Heartbreak* category. Unfortunately, the two often go hand in hand. As previously mentioned, chocolate contains a very powerful amphetamine called phenylethylamine (PEA). PEA is the chemical emitted when people experience the rush of falling in love, and a substantial increase of PEA occurs in the brain during orgasm. Adding a little chocolate to your relationship mix is bound to produce some stimulating effects!

If you indulge in the prescribed bar you'll benefit from the almonds as well. One study maintained that eating 10-20 almonds a day invigorates sexual desire.



Lactose Intolerance

Prescription: 3 squares non-dairy dark chocolate taken whenever the mood strikes, up to a maximum of 9 squares per day.

Recommended bar: Tropical Source® raspberry dark chocolate, gluten and dairy free

Supporting Evidence

If you love milk but your body doesn't, this could be the answer for you. Researchers from the University of Rhode Island demonstrated that adding 1 ½ teaspoons of cocoa to milk reduced and sometimes even eliminated cramping and bloating in half of their lactose-intolerant subjects. Apparently chocolate stimulates the enzyme lactase which is required for lactose digestion. But the prescription still calls for dairy free chocolate to insure you don't aggravate the condition. However, if you find you've inadvertently ingested something containing lactose or milk, consider using chocolate to help ease the response. (For a complete selection of non-dairy chocolates, visit www.dolphinnatural.com.)

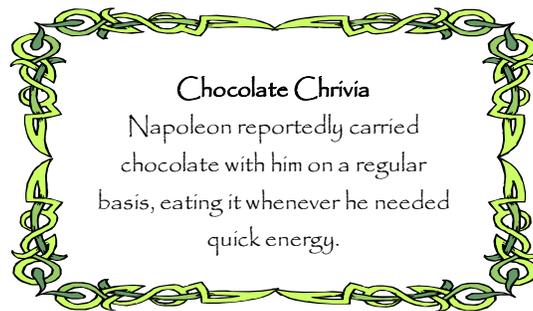
Life Expectancy

Prescription: One dark organic chocolate bar of your choice daily for the rest of your life. Keep alcohol to a minimum, drive safe, relax and drink plenty of pure spring water.

Recommended bar: Green & Black's Maya Gold dark organic chocolate with spices

Supporting Evidence

Thanks to Harvard for supplying the chocolate lovers of the world with this invaluable information. After studying 7,841 male graduates, the Harvard School of Public Health reported that those who eat chocolate live nearly a year longer than those who attempt to go through life without the luxury. Although they didn't outright report it, I suspect that the real reason chocolate lovers live an extra year is so they can enjoy chocolate for another 365 days. This could quite possibly be the single most important reason to make sure there's adequate chocolate in your diet. You'll average an extra year to enjoy the fruits of the cocoa bean in its many varied splendors, as well as anything else you like to do.



Memory Loss

Prescription: 4 squares dark organic chocolate, taken after lunch and again right before bed. May take with tea, water or hot chocolate (made from cocoa powder, see Appendix C).

Recommended bar: Rapunzel's Bittersweet Chocolate

Supporting Evidence

Memory experts have shown that eating a little of the right kind of chocolate each day can actually help improve your memory. Dark chocolate contains a compound called procyanidin that helps block the effect of two aging factors in the brain: oxidation and inflammation. These same procyanidins may also help the memory by stimulating circulation in the brain. The increased blood flow delivers more oxygen and nutrients to the brain, which helps maintain optimal function. Once again, choose the correct type of chocolate: dark chocolate containing 50% cocoa or more.

Mood Swings

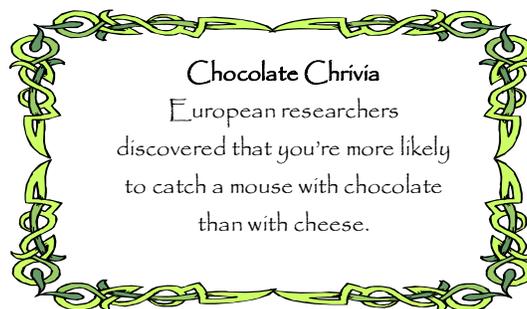
Prescription: 6 squares dark organic chocolate taken with or without nuts twice daily at the onset of any bad mood. It's acceptable to count picking up kids' clothes and an overstuffed garage as possible attitude triggers.

Recommended bar: Green & Black's dark organic chocolate with orange and spices

Supporting Evidence

There's a bounty of scientific evidence supporting the fact that the body releases endorphins (natural feel-good chemicals) when we eat chocolate. But many of the sensations we experience are difficult to document.

The mood-lifting benefits can probably best be described as a combination of events. Many people associate chocolate with love because it is generally given on Valentine's Day. You've probably received chocolate from someone who loves you even when it wasn't a special holiday. People associate good feelings with chocolate when it's consumed, and sometimes even by the mere sight of it. Chocolate also melts perfectly at body temperature. Once it's in the mouth, the smooth, creamy texture feels soft, warm and delicious, obviously initiating more feel-good sensations. The fat content in chocolate provides satiation for the appetite, and its flavor compounds satisfy a diverse assortment of cravings. When attempting to manage moods, this delightful mélange provides an abundance of support!



Nausea / Speaking in Public

Prescription: 1.6 oz (1/2 bar) dark organic chocolate, taken with 1 cup mint tea. Take peppermint mints shortly before speaking engagements. Look in the mirror prior to stepping on the podium to insure a chocolate-free face and reduce the possibility of embarrassment.

Recommended bar: Tropical Source® mint crunch dark chocolate

Supporting Evidence

Chocolate releases both serotonin and tryptophan into the brain, two neurotransmitters that promote relaxation. Since a relaxed state of mind is ideal for public speaking, a good quality dark chocolate bar can be very helpful. Adding mint offers additional relief as it has been used for centuries as a digestive aide. It's been used to reduce morning sickness, menstrual cramps and nausea, including the type induced by public speaking engagements. Even after a night of heavy drinking, try this prescription for measurable relief.

Osteoporosis

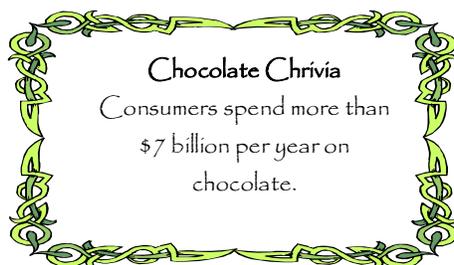
Prescription: 4 squares organic milk chocolate (with or without almonds) and one cup hot cocoa (see Appendix C), taken mid-morning 4-5 days per week.

Recommended bar: Dagoba® milk chocolate with ginger and chai or Organic Swiss dark chocolate with almonds.

Supporting Evidence

Chocolate contains both calcium and magnesium, two minerals that are deficient in many people's diets. You can't prevent osteoporosis by consuming immense quantities of chocolate. However, by following the prescription exactly, the odds of becoming calcium deficient can be moved in your favor. The cup of milk provides 30% of your daily calcium requirement, and chocolate contains minerals that assist the body with calcium absorption.

There are two chocolate bar options in the prescription, one with and one without almonds. Almonds provide an excellent collection of minerals associated with building bone density like calcium, magnesium, manganese and phosphorous. Regardless of which bar you choose, drink it with the prescribed chocolate milk for maximum benefits.



PMS

Prescription: on days 14-25 of your cycle, take 1/4 of a 3.5 oz high quality dark chocolate bar daily after lunch, or whenever food cravings hit, limiting intake to one half bar per day. On days 25-28, consume up to an entire bar per day, as needed, to curb cravings, crabbiness and lethargy.

Recommended bar: Green & Black's dark organic chocolate

Supporting Evidence

Studies have shown that many women use chocolate to self-medicate during this often stressful time of the month. This is hardly breaking news. I don't know of a woman who *doesn't* use chocolate during this time of the month! There's no need to examine the reasons we use it. A simple review of many of the other ailments in this book will address the issue. After all, it appears that PMS is a collective compilation of symptoms packed into 3-5 days.

One of the actual causes of PMS is a drop in the hormone progesterone. The change can cause nasty mood swings, hot flashes, and a host of other miserable symptoms. Adding the trace mineral magnesium to the diet of those affected with chronic PMS symptoms has shown to help alleviate the problem by increasing the pre-menstrual progesterone levels. Chocolate has one of the highest concentrations of natural magnesium. Perhaps this is the real reason why many women report that they crave chocolate for days before the monthly event.

Serotonin also drops during the course of the month. It maintains a fairly normal level until approximately day 14, when it begins a steady downward path. By the last few days of the cycle, serotonin levels are at their lowest. This creates a more pronounced desire for something that will lift your mood like chocolate, which helps release serotonin into your system.

Endorphins also fly up and down the chart during the month. They actually spike within 48 hours of ovulation, toppling back down to a normal level toward the end of the cycle. The disheartening synopsis: Not only does the body experience a drop in progesterone and serotonin by month's end, but it also suffers the withdrawals of endorphin euphoria. Fortunately chocolate contains natural endorphins that can help ease this drop.

Since chocolate helps curb both the mental and physiological symptoms of PMS, be prepared! Have plenty of high quality, dark organic chocolate on hand at all times. Better to snap off the corner of a chocolate bar than your significant other's head. Do the right thing!

Sassy Kids

Prescription: 1/2 bar of high quality dark or milk chocolate, with or without nuts, given as needed, preferably after meals or as an award for improved behavior.

Recommended bar: Dagoba® milk chocolate or Dagoba® milk chocolate with hazelnuts.

Supporting Evidence

Controlling children through manipulation with chocolate rewards may not seem like the best idea at first glance. But many people already use food-based rewards to encourage good behavior. The issue is more about the type of food given, not whether to give chocolate.

Kids usually act out when they're tired, hungry or in a bad mood. Chocolate offers an excellent one-two remedy with its perfect blend of sugar and fat. Sugar encourages the release of serotonin, a chemical that creates calmness and mood stability. Fat helps release endorphins, natural brain chemicals that promote energy and euphoria. Add that to all the other benefits they'll get from chocolate like vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and a host of flavor compounds and you've just solved a problem with a healthy treat. Of course kids may get the picture and act out more often in an attempt to get more chocolate. To overcome this possible hazard, just give them a few squares every day to regulate mood swings and promote euphoria (for the kids as well as the parents).

Note: I've recommended milk chocolate for kids because it's so much milder than dark chocolate. However, don't hesitate to give the little darlings dark chocolate if they like it.



Sniffles

Prescription: 3-6 squares dark organic chocolate with mint, taken daily just after a chicken soup lunch, until symptoms subside. Maximum of 12 squares in a 24 hour period.

Recommended bar: Tropical Source® mint crunch dark chocolate

Supporting Evidence

Colds need plenty of pampering and chocolate with mint is just the “mother” you need. The antioxidants in chocolate help your immune system combat colds. The sugar/fat combination, assortment of flavors and endorphins will certainly make you feel better. Adding mint to your

chocolate helps because peppermint relaxes breathing passages. Peppermint is used in many teas to combat nasal congestion, stuffiness, hay fever, sinusitis and allergies by helping to restore breathing.

If you're still not convinced that eating chocolate will help, consider this: More than one study has proven that placebos (usually sugar pills) are very often as effective as real medication in many areas including migraines, cancer, and even surgery. The simple idea that you "think" chocolate is helping in fact makes it so. So even if you're skeptical, take a chance and make your placebo as tasty as possible.

Spousal Discord

Prescription: Enjoy Chocolate Kahlua® Truffles (recipe in Appendix C) and ice cream together with candles, soft music and a glass of red wine each. Children in the area will most likely counteract the effects of the prescription, so it's best to follow it in a lowly lit, private location.

Supporting Evidence

Chocolate, love, passion and romance. Are they rightfully bundled in the same package? It's a little difficult to prove scientifically, but the facts seem to point in that direction. Chocolate helps release feel-good chemicals in the brain, and it even contains the same chemical (PEA) that the brain emits when falling in love. It contains tryptophan and serotonin, two neurotransmitters that help the body relax and promote euphoria. And finally, with its unique sugar/fat combination, sensual melt at body temperature and the vast array of rich, complex, velvety flavors, chocolate *is* passion. Here are a few recommendations to help you reconnect with your loved one:

If you need to say:

"I Love You" A bar of high grade dark organic chocolate and a red rose across the top.

"I'm Sorry" A larger bar of high quality dark organic chocolate and a thoughtful apology on a handmade card.

"Let's Have Fun" An exotically flavored large dark chocolate bar that can be broken into individual squares and fed to your partner, as needed, while playing games of intimacy.

"You are the best person in the world!" Decorate your significant other's office (or favorite room) with various types of chocolate wrapped in colorful paper. Place a copy of "The Chocolate Therapist," tied with a tastefully selected ribbon, on the center of their desk. Follow your intuition.

Stress

Current health benefits of chocolate consolidated into a single resource.

The Chocolate Therapist: A User's Guide to the Extraordinary Health Benefits of Chocolate

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