Health By Chocolate

How to have your candy and eat it too

February 1, 2007 By Nick Burns

Since the dawn of the new millennium, when studies first identified a powerful antioxidant in chocolate, news media have overflowed with stories on the candy's nutritional benefits. Chocolate's flavonoids reduce cholesterol and unclog blood vessels—which is especially sweet for positive people, many of whom have heart problems.

POZ offers the perfect Valentine: a roundup of the tastiest, most beneficial bars, selected by HIV nutritionist Juliet Johnson of Washington, DC's Food & Friends. "Choose chocolate with 70% or more cocoa," she suggests, explaining that dark and semisweet pack more flavonoids than milk chocolate (which also has more creamy, fatty additives). Generally, she adds, the less processing (which reduces flavonoids) the better; avoid bars processed with alkali; and don't exceed a one-ounce serving daily.

- **Endangered Species Extreme Dark Chocolate** (88% cocoa, 100 calories, 10 g fat per oz, $2.75; www.chocolatebar.com) Ease dietary and social guilt in one bite: 10% of net profits go to conservation groups.
- **Vere Dark Chocolate** (75% cocoa, 80 calories, 3.5 g fat per oz, $3; www.veregoods.com) These bars preserve cocoa's health benefits with a short fermentation cycle and no sugar alcohols. Vere good.
- **Green & Black's Dark chocolate** (70% cocoa, 150 calories, 11 g fat per oz, $3.69; www.greenandblacks.com) There's a reason it's sold in health food stores: This treat contains organic raw cane sugar along with all that cocoa.
- **Scharffen Berger Unsweetened dark 9.7 oz Baking bar** (99% cocoa, 190 calories, 15 g fat per oz, $11; www.scharffenberger.com) Minimal processing preserves the cooking benefits. You can even snack on bits (but you have to break them off with a hammer).

- **CocoaVia Original Dark Chocolate** (100 calories, 8 g fat per oz, $4.99 per box of five; www.cocoavia.com) The cocoa content is unlisted, but each bar's 100 mg of flavonoids spell health. And it's still candy.
- **Ghirardelli Chocolate Intense Dark Twilight Delight** (72% cocoa, 150 calories, 12 g fat per oz, $2.99; www.ghirardelli.com) Worried about leaving your heart in San Francisco? Try this bar, toting as much cocoa as the Bay has fog.
- **Toblerone Swiss Milk Chocolate With Honey and Almond Nougat** (180 calories, 8 g fat per oz, $1.99; www.toblerone.com) What if you just crave milk chocolate? Toblerone isn't processed with alkali, so it retains some antioxidants. Johnson says bite in "as an occasional treat"—our kind of treatment.

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