

Chocolate accelerates weight loss

Description



Chocolate accelerates weight loss: Research claims it lowers cholesterol and aids sleep

CAN you indulge your sweet tooth and lose weight? If itâ€™s chocolate that you crave then the answer seems to be yes.

Chocolate can aid weight loss when combined with a low-carb diet, study claims.

Confusion reigns in the diet world, with conflicting recommendations for diets that range from high-protein to low-carbohydrate and even high-fat.

According to many nutrition researchers, the problem is that these tools are too blunt.

â€œWhat is important is the specific combination of foods in your diet,â€ says Johannes Bohannon, research director of the nonprofit Institute of Diet and Health. Just lowering the proportion of carbohydrates is not a reliable weight loss intervention because it has different physiological effect depending on the bioactive compounds in your diet.â€

A study by German researchers, published in the International Archives of Medicine, looked at the effect chocolate has on our diets.

Chocolate is a rich source of bioactive compounds, particularly a group of molecules called flavonoids, plant compounds associated with several positive health impacts.

But teasing out the possible effects of such compounds in your diet, and how it may interact with various diet interventions, is rarely studied.

It could be that simply consuming chocolate in combination with dietary interventions has no effect, or it could make such diets even more effective in the right dose.

To test the idea, researchers divided volunteers aged 19 to 67 into three groups.

Surprisingly, the low-carb plus chocolate group lost 10% more weight.

One group followed a strict low-carbohydrate diet, another group followed the low-carbohydrate diet and also consumed 42 grams of dark (81%) chocolate per day, and a control group followed their normal diet.

Besides tracking their body weight and measuring blood chemistry before, during and after, participants filled out questionnaires to assess sleep quality and well-being.

As predicted, the low-carb group lost weight compared to the control.

But surprisingly, the low-carb plus chocolate group lost 10% more weight.

Not only that, but the weight loss persisted, compared to the low-carb group which saw a return of the weight after 3 weeks — a classic problem in dietary interventions known as the “yo-yo effect.”

The chocolate group also reported better sleep and well-being, and their blood cholesterol levels were significantly reduced.

“To our surprise, the effect of chocolate is real,” says Bohannon. “It is not enough to just consume chocolate, but in combination with exercise and reduction in carbohydrates, our data indicate that chocolate can be a weight loss accelerator.”

The researchers suggest that high-cocoa chocolate has the potential to enhance other diets as well.

“The best part about this discovery,” says Bohannon, “is that you can buy chocolate everywhere, cheaply and without having to believe diet gurus or purchase expensive nutrition products over the Internet.”

Sarah Barns

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