

## The Magnificent Seven (Dark Chocolate Benefits)

### Description



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Chocolate can be extremely healthful and beneficial to your health, but before you get carried away with those common candy bars from childhood, understand that the superfood nutritional qualities come from cacao or cocoa, the bitter seeds from which chocolate is made.

It's best to select chocolates labeled Fair Trade and organic with at least 70% cacao or cocoa (both words indicate the same bean) and no sweeter than bitter-sweet. The more bitter the better. Anything less is too watered down with milk and saturated with unhealthy refined sugar, or worse, HFCS corn syrup.

Actually, the most healthful form of cacao is cacao nibs, small bitter pieces of cacao that you can nibble on, put into coffee, top off a bowl of plain whole milk organic yogurt with raw honey, or throw the nibs into a smoothie. They can be purchased from the spice bulk section of a good health food store.

Raw cacao powder or nibs are super antioxidants, which protect you against cellular damage from the [oxidative stress](#) of free radicals. Their ORAC ratings (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity) are [higher than any other food](#), with dark chocolates not far behind.

[Antioxidant protection](#) reduces aging symptoms and helps prevent diseases such as Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis (MS), heart disease, and even cancer. You can even [ease a common coughing spell](#)

with dark chocolate.

Moderate consumption of dark [chocolate for optimum health benefits](#) should be six to ten grams almost every day. A typical dark chocolate bar is 100 grams. A heaping tablespoon of cacao nibs is probably even better.

## The Magnificent Seven

1. **Cardiac Arrest and Stroke Protection** – Dark chocolate lowers blood pressure and reduces clogged artery congestion, thus lowering the risks of heart attacks and strokes. It does this by co-creating nitric oxide (NO), a proven blood vessel [vasodilator](#). Dark chocolate’s cacao is also high in magnesium, which also contributes heavily to heart health. Most people are [magnesium deficient](#), by the way.
2. **Reduces Risk of Colon Cancer** – Cocoa polyphenols from dark chocolate reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. This was determined in a study by the *Science and Technology Institute of Food and Nutrition* in Spain, which was published in the journal *Molecular Nutrition*. That study is [explained here](#).
3. **Healthy Fats** – The fat in chocolate is abundant oleic acid, the type of fatty acid found in olive oil which helps prevent heart disease and promote antioxidant activity. Other healthy fats in cacao are stearic acid and palmitic acid. Just avoid milk chocolate.
4. **Enhances Glucose Metabolism** – Dark chocolate (70% plus cacao) candy inhibits blood sugar issues to [help prevent diabetes](#) and obesity. Surprising, eh? You can find dark chocolate candy bars that are as high as 90% cacao. Once you get over the addicted taste with those cheap milk chocolate candies, you’ll find dark chocolate so tasty you won’t go back to those other candies.
5. **Improves Mood** – Studies have shown that dark chocolate contains serotonin and increases endorphin production. It’s a natural anti-depressant.
6. **Improves Brain Function** – *Nottingham University* professor Ian MacDonald used MRI analysis to determine improved brain activity with people who had just [consumed cocoa drinks](#). Hopefully they didn’t have to undergo too many MRI scans that would fry their improved brains!
7. **Eases PMS Issues** – [Here’s why](#) husbands and boyfriends should give dark chocolate to their wives or girlfriends. Hopefully not both simultaneously.

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[Paul Fassa](#)

### Category

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### Tags

1. Cacao
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**Author**

sephra

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