

Is it True.....Chocolate is Good for You?

By John Rizzo

Recent studies have shown that there may be heart healthy benefits in eating chocolate. Cocoa, the earliest stage of chocolate, possesses flavonoids; an antioxidant that is believed to help the body's cells resist damage caused by free radicals. Free Radicals are formed simply by breathing our air or by environmental toxins such as cigarette smoke.

But before you get too excited, note that the flavonoids in chocolate are reduced the more it is processed. For instance, dark chocolate is richer in flavonoids than milk chocolate.

Don't forget about the fat. The fat in chocolate consists of 50% oleic acid and a combination of stearic and palmitic acids. Studies show that oleic acid does not affect your Ldl (bad) cholesterol which is linked to heart disease. However, palmitic acid does affect your body's cholesterol levels, but only comprises about 30% of the fat calories in chocolate.

So if eaten in moderation, dark chocolate can be a wonderful, guilt-free snack.

Chocolate Mocha Truffles

Yield: 30

Ingredients:

Semi Sweet
Chocolate Morsels 12 ounces
Cream Cheese, soft 4 ounces
Brewed or instant coffee 16 oz.
Milk Chocolate Pieces 1 1/3 Cups (8 oz)
 or 5 1/6 1.55 oz bars
Shortening 2 TBL
Dark Chocolate (optional) 2 oz.

Method:

If using brewed coffee: In a small saucepan over medium heat, reduce all 16 oz of coffee down to 2 teaspoons. (Be careful not to burn)

If using instant coffee: combine 4 teaspoons of crystals with 1 teaspoon of hot water. Set aside.

In a double boiler (stainless mixing bowl over a pot of simmering water), melt the chocolate morsels while stirring frequently with a rubber spatula.

Cut the cream cheese into 8 pieces and add to the melted chocolate stirring until combined.

Add the reduced coffee to the chocolate mixture; stirring until smooth. Cover and chill for approximately 2 hours or until firm.

Using 2 teaspoons or a small scoop, form 1 inch balls and place on a wax paper lined tray. Cover and return to the refrigerator.

In a double boiler, melt the milk chocolate and shortening together; stirring frequently with a spatula. Remove from heat and cool to room temp.

Use a toothpick or small fork to dip chocolate balls into milk chocolate mixture; let excess drip back into pan. Place truffles back onto wax paper and chill for 30 minutes.

Optional: Melt the dark chocolate in a double boiler and drizzle over the tops of the truffles. Store truffles in the refrigerator. Pull truffles from refrigerator approximately 30 minutes before serving.