

# SEASONED

## *Ingredients for Healthy Aging*



### **Dark Chocolate-A Health Food?**

Unfortunately when something sounds too good to be true, it often turns out that it is.



So, when it comes to the health benefits of chocolate one has to ask themselves, can it really be good for you?

In fact, dark chocolate does have health benefits. These benefits come from flavanols, which are found in cocoa beans. Flavanols have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These in turn reduces some risk factors of heart disease, such as slightly lowering blood pressure, lowering cholesterol and improving overall vascular function.

In addition, some research has linked chocolate consumption to reduced risks of diabetes, stroke and heart attack. But more research is needed to confirm these results.

However, to receive the health benefits it's important to consume dark chocolate. Milk interferes with the body's ability to absorb

the antioxidants, so that means milk chocolate doesn't have the same benefits. Also, it's important to remember portion size. Just 1 small square 2-3 times a week, or about a half bar a week has shown these health benefits. Dark chocolate does contain fat and sugar, so consuming it in moderation is important. You want to look for a chocolate that has a 70% or higher cocoa content. Sometimes it is called bittersweet or semi-sweet chocolate.

The best dark chocolate will have chocolate liquor or cocoa powder listed as its first ingredient. Avoid any dark chocolate which has trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oil.

### **Buyer's Checklist**

The best dark chocolate has distinct characteristics, including the following:

1. High in cocoa: 70% or higher cocoa percentage.
2. Cocoa comes first: Cocoa or a form of cocoa is the first ingredient.
3. No unnecessary ingredients: Avoid dark chocolate that contains trans-fat, milk, artificial flavorings, high amounts of sugar and other unnecessary ingredients.
4. No alkali processing: Alkali processing is also known as Dutching. Avoid chocolate processed this way.

## Chocolate Dipped Strawberries

Makes 4 servings

### Ingredients:

2 oz. dark chocolate  
12 Strawberries

### Directions:

- 1.) Line a baking sheet with parchment or wax paper.
- 2.) Microwave chocolate in a small bowl on medium for 1 minute. Stir, and then continue microwaving on medium in 20-second intervals until melted, stirring after each interval. You may use a double boiler instead, using hot but not boiling water. Stir until melted.
- 3.) Dip half the strawberry in the melted chocolate. Let the excess drip back into the bowl. Place the fruit on the baking dish. Refrigerate until the chocolate is set, about 30 minutes.



## Nutrition Question?

Consult with a registered dietitian! We offer nutrition counseling to Boulder County older adults (60+) and caregivers—at no cost (donations accepted). Call to ask a question or set up an appointment:

**303-678-6115**

**303-441-3910 En Español**

Also, workshops that help support healthy living and falls prevention are available. Call 303-441-3955 for more information.

### Nutrition Information

Per serving: 133 calories; 9 g fat(5 g sat); 3 g fiber; 20 g carbohydrates; 1 g protein; 6 mcg folate; 0 mg cholesterol; 14 g sugars; 13 g added sugars; 3 IU vitamin A; 14 mg vitamin C; 4 mg calcium; 0 mg iron; 0 mg sodium; 37 mg potassium



Information & Assistance for Aging Well

**303-441-1617**

[www.BoulderCountyAging.org](http://www.BoulderCountyAging.org)