

The “Mystery” of Chocolate

Valentine’s Day is coming. Do you look forward to chocolate, a typical gift for this occasion? But lo and behold! Overconsumption of chocolate, which is high in energy and sugar, will cause obesity. Nevertheless, some studies show that chocolate is beneficial to cardiovascular health. Are you confused? How would you weigh the pros and cons of chocolate eating??



Frequent consumption of chocolate could be a health hazard

Although cocoa, from which chocolate comes, contains an antioxidant called “flavanols” that might protect cells and the cardiovascular system, this is definitely not to tell us that we could eat chocolate without regard to dietary guidelines. As chocolate is on the top of the food pyramid, alongside candies and potato crisps, all of which are high in oil, salt or sugar, these foods should be consumed as little as possible, as overconsumption will increase the risks of obesity and chronic diseases. So, don’t eat more chocolate than you should on the excuse of antioxidants!!



Beware of the false charm of chocolate

A lot of people have the belief that dark chocolate is more healthy than other chocolates; this is only half true. Dark chocolate does contain less sugar, more cocoa, which is the antioxidant ingredient of chocolate, and thus has better antioxidant capacities. From the perspective of energy, however, the more cocoa a piece of dark chocolate contains, the more fat and energy it has. (See the table below) In short, no matter which type of chocolate you eat, overconsumption may lead to obesity.

Only for tidbit

Again, as chocolate is high in fat and sugar, it is only meant for tidbit. Looking for a Valentine’s Day gift? Think about a bite-size pack of chocolate. In fact, the meaning of a heart-warming Valentine’s Day does not lie in chocolate. All it takes for a truly sweet, memorable Valentine’s Day is being near your beloved darling, with a cup of low-fat hot chocolate milk around.

Type of chocolate	Energy (kcal)
White chocolate	532
Milk chocolate	535
Dark chocolate (45-59% cacao solids)	546
Dark chocolate (60-69% cacao solids)	579
Dark chocolate (70-85% cacao solids)	598
Per 100g	
Source: Centre for Food Safety	

To know more about ...

- ✧ healthy eating, please visit ‘Health Zone’ website at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ ‘Health@work.hk Project’, please visit <http://cheu.gov.hk/healthatwork>