



## **Chocolate: It's Healthier than You Think!**

Looking for a healthy gift, snack or treat? Look no further than dark chocolate which is not only delicious – its surprisingly nutritious. Dark chocolate is rich in iron and minerals like magnesium, selenium, potassium, and manganese. It also contains flavanols, catechins and polyphenols, antioxidants that ward off disease and protect cells from oxidative damage.

According to a German study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, dark chocolate can lower high blood pressure. Another recent study published in the same Journal reveals that when paired with almonds, dark chocolate reduced LDL (bad) cholesterol while increasing HDL (good) cholesterol.

Ongoing research conducted by Harvard Medical School and Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston indicate eating dark chocolate at least five times a week may lower the risk of heart disease by 57%, and when eaten two to three times weekly, can lower the risk of calcified arterial plaque by 32%.

Several studies, including one by the Nestle Research Center in Lausanne, Switzerland, show the flavanols in dark chocolate can improve blood flow and reduce cortisol levels, improving cognitive function and skin density. Of course, chocolate is high in calories, so enjoy it in moderation and choose high-quality, dark chocolate with a cocoa mass of 70% or more.

At Belue Farms Natural Market, we carry a wide assortment of dark chocolate, including chocolate sweetened with Stevia and chocolate approved for Paleo, keto, gluten-free and vegan diets. Fortunately, you only need an ounce or two to receive the nutritional benefits. You'll not only satisfy your taste buds—you'll do something good for your mind, body and soul.

*Eat Healthy. Be Happy.*

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