****

**Chocoholics Anonymous**

**Sweet Snackin’ for Chocolate Lovers**

Why is a chiropractor talking about chocolate?

I am a wellness chiropractor. Chiropractic is based on these simple truths:

1. The body is **self-healing** and **self-regulating**.
2. The **purpose** of the brain and nerve system is to control and coordinate the function of all the cells, tissues, and organs in the body, and to **adapt** the organism to its environment.” (*Gray’s  Anatomy)*
3. Anything that interferes with the nervous system will affect our function
4. Subluxations (nerve interference or irritation) are caused by our inability to handle life’s three major stressors; physical, mental-emotional and chemical.
5. Left uncorrected subluxations and health may degenerate and worsen
6. If we correct the subluxations and show you ways to quit recreating problems in the future you may:

a. Feel better

b. Prevent problems in the future

c. Reverse effects of the aging process

d. Have a better quality of life

Chocolate has the potential of falling into the category of both chemical and emotional stress, which can lead to subluxations… ***unless you know the right way to eat it.***

Chocolate, it turns out, might be one of the greatest foods on the planet. It’s heavenly to eat, and it has significant benefits for your health – from supporting major organs and brain function, to helping you avoid disease. (As it turns out, your vice is actually good for you!)

To get all of the momentous benefits of chocolate, you need to be eating the *right* kind! So, to help you make sure that you’re getting the most out of your chocoholism, read below!

**The Benefits of Chocolate**

* Lower risk of stroke
  + A Swedish study done by Dr. Susanna C. Larson, PhD showed that those who ate 45 grams of chocolate a week had a 20% lower risk of stroke than those who ate fewer than 9 grams
  + Additionally, a ACS study found epicatechins in chocolate help prevent blood clotting and inflammation, which help prevent some types of stroke
  + Those under wellness chiropractic care have significantly fewer strokes than the average in the population
  + Regular exercise, a diet with healthy fats and low carbs, and dealing with stress effectively also lower your risk of stroke
* Lower blood pressure
  + Flavanols, naturally found in cocoa, have been shown to help lower blood pressure
  + Chiropractic care, regular exercise, a diet with healthy fats and low carbs, and dealing with stress effectively also keep your blood pressure low
* Lower LDL (“bad”) Cholesterol
  + Naturally occurring polyphenols in cocoa boost levels of HDL, the “good” cholesterol, while at the same time reduce levels of LDL, the “bad” cholesterol
  + Good cholesterol is important for all nervous system, immune system and hormone function; low cholesterol found to contribute to cancer
  + Chiropractic care, regular exercise, a diet with healthy fats and low carbs, and dealing with stress effectively also lower “bad” cholesterol
* Lower risk of heart disease
  + Research shows that flavanols in cocoa help to lower blood pressure, improve blood flow, and reduce the chance of clots
  + Chiropractic care, regular exercise, a diet with healthy fats and low carbs, and dealing with stress effectively also lower the risk of heart disease
* Increases insulin sensitivity, lowering risk of diabetes (UNLESS SUGAR IS ADDED!)
* Contains anti-aging properties, helping those who eat it to be younger for longer
  + Chiropractic care, regular exercise, a diet with healthy fats and low carbs, and dealing with stress effectively also help slow down the effects of aging
* Anti-inflammatory, which helps prevent disease
  + An anti-inflammatory diet and regular exercise also help reduce inflammation
* Contains a large amount of fiber, which helps you feel full longer!
  + A serving of one 87% cacao chocolate bar contains 8g of fiber
* Contains antioxidants
  + Antioxidants help the body’s cells resist damage caused by free radicals that are formed by normal bodily processes, such as breathing, and from environmental contaminants
  + Flavonoids and polyphenols found in cocoa help reduce your risk of developing diseases like Alzheimer’s, heart disease, and cancer with their “antioxidant” power
  + Antioxidants can also be gained by eating fresh fruits and vegetable
* Reduces chronic coughs
  + A FASEB study showed theobromine, a main compound in chocolate, has a promising effect on persistent coughing
* Encourages your brain to produce endorphins and serotonin, which improve your mood and make you feel *amazing*
  + Serotonin release is a natural anxiety treatment
* It tastes great and is one of the many pleasures of life!

**How to Eat Chocolate**

* The higher percentage of cacao (cocoa), the better!
  + Look for 70% cacao or higher for optimal nutritional value
  + Dark chocolate isn’t standardized in the U.S. – some can contain as little as 30% cacao
* Avoid chocolate that has been “processed with alkali”
  + Also called “Dutch processing”
  + Changes pH of the chocolate
  + Reduces health properties
* Avoid GMOs (including GMO Soy Lecithin)
* Choose 100% organic
* Choose raw cacao for greater value
* Avoid chocolate with sugar as the sweetener
* Often GMO beet sugar is labelled “sugar”
* 1 tsp sugar shuts down the immune system for 45 minutes
* Sugar is inflammatory
* Sugar increases risk of heart disease and diabetes
* Creates spikes in blood sugar that then can affect mood and energy levels
* Choose dark chocolate only
  + Milk can prohibit the absorption of antioxidants
* Eat in moderation
  + One (small) piece of chocolate a day is great for you – but don’t overdo it
  + Chocolate contains caffeine, so watch how much you eat before bed
  + Make chocolate part of a balanced diet, complete with fresh, natural foods