

How to Choose the Best Chocolate

Not sure how to choose the chocolate with the most antioxidants? Read on. Foods high in antioxidants are often called “super-foods” because they have additional health properties beyond their nutritional value. Chocolate, especially dark varieties with cocoa content of at least 72% has been shown to have heart-protecting properties. However, chocolate used in food processing is often treated with alkali to mollify the astringency of natural cocoa. Studies show that such treatment, called alkalization, often reduces amount of flavonols, powerful antioxidants beneficial for your heart, by as much as 80%!

How do you know if your chocolate has been treated with alkali?

- Check the label - if one of the ingredients is cocoa treated with alkali, it may not be the best choice.
- Alkali-treated chocolate, also known as Dutch or “dutched” cocoa, is often used in prepackaged foods such as baking and hot cocoa mixes. To reap full benefits of chocolate goodness, add a little dark chocolate when baking or cooking from scratch.
- Dark chocolate bars are least likely to be alkalized so go for the best quality chocolate you can afford. Look for bars with at least a 70% cocoa content. Remember it's not about quantity but a superior decadent flavor when it comes to chocolate!
- Give raw cocoa nibs or raw cocoa bars a try.
- Most importantly, choose dark chocolate as a sweet treat – not a health food.