



# Chocolate in Moderation

By Dr. Julia Richman DDS, Dino Kids Dentistry

In my last article, many of you were surprised to hear that I support chocolate (in moderation) as a healthier snack. Say what?!!! To show that I'm not the only one, and no, I'm NOT being paid by the chocolate companies, I asked my good friend and fellow pediatric dentist, Dr Roger Lucas, to answer some questions. Dr. Lucas is the author of *More Chocolate, No Cavities*.

**Dr. Richman:** In your book, *More Chocolate, No Cavities*, you are a huge proponent of eating chocolate, why do you think chocolate is a good idea?

**Dr. Lucas:** Based on my own observations: Avoiding all sugar isn't a realistic goal for kids or families. So, giving alternatives that aren't perfect, but achieve the goal of preventing or greatly reducing cavities is what I call being practical. Being overly idealistic will lead to failure and loss of hope.

Chocolate is higher in fat. Fat can't be converted to lactic acid by bacteria. Therefore, fat helps prevent cavities. That is why you can rub cheese or peanut butter all over your teeth, and it would be impossible to get a cavity from that food.

- Dark chocolate is best, because of the higher fat content. It is like eating sticky whole milk.
- Milk chocolate isn't as ideal and will cause cavities, just much more slowly than any other candy you can think of.

There are also multiple in vitro studies, which show chocolate has less of an acid attack on teeth. And even a human study from the 1950s (Vipeholm) that showed that people who ate more chocolate had less cavities.

**Dr. Richman:** Is chocolate just a good alternative to other sweets or does it have health benefits?

**Dr. Lucas:** That depends on which nutrition guidelines you follow. I follow a more "alternative" guideline that I believe, based on my interpretation of the data, that saturated fat from natural sources is over-vilified. For the big studies that the cardiology associations look at, they lump all saturated fat as a macromolecule into one big category. Fried chicken and donuts should not fall into the same category as coconuts and eggs. I follow more of the paleo/keto theories on nutrition. Basically, if my grandma made it on her farm, it isn't that bad for you.

# ANSWERS

## TRIVIA Questions on page 15

By Matthew Harris

**Answers:** 1. Stephen Tyler 2. Tom Brady (7)  
3. John Wayne 4. First Motion-Picture Camera invented by Thomas Edison 5. U.S. State code where number issued  
6. The Queen of Jazz: Ella Fitzgerald 7. Mary Quant but also will accept Parisian André Courrèges  
8. War of 1812 9. Andrew Johnson.

- 18 points** –Hello Genius;
- 15 to 17 points** – We bow to your intellect
- 10 to 14 points** – A Superior Effort
- 6 to 9 points**- You've got potential
- 4 to 6 points** -- Maybe a little less TV and a few more books
- 1 point to 3 points** – Someone a little Distracted?
- 0 points** – Change Channel to Jeopardy!

## WORD SCRAMBLE

Puzzle on page 16

By Martha Stallings

### Presidents' Day

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Commander   | 6. Democracy  |
| 2. Lincoln     | 7. Kennedy    |
| 3. White House | 8. Obama      |
| 4. Reagan      | 9. Clinton    |
| 5. Washington  | 10. Roosevelt |



Also, there are potentially a lot of health benefits from theobromine. But you would need to have at least 70% dark chocolate to get more of that good chemical.

**Dr. Richman:** What about the sugar content in chocolate? Isn't sugar something to avoid?

**Dr. Lucas:** I believe there is too much focus on the amount of sugar. The concentration of sugar is far more important.

- For example, a cup of whole milk and a cup of skim milk both have 12 grams of sugar.
- However, the whole milk doesn't spike your blood sugar. Skim milk does.

In the American Academy of Dermatology guidelines, they cite studies that teenage boys who drink more skim milk have more acne than those who drink more whole milk.

And for teeth, in the laboratory setting, whole milk is not converted into enough acid to dissolve enamel, but skim milk (and 2% milk) have a high enough sugar concentration to dissolve enamel.

In other words, the fat content for chocolate makes a lower sugar concentration, so it is harder for bacteria to convert it to acid.

**Dr. Richman:** Is dark chocolate better for you? How about white chocolate?

**Dr. Lucas:** White chocolate does not have the good chemical theobromine. However, it is similar to milk chocolate, as far as fat concentration. So, I still prefer dark chocolate for myself.

So, the proof is in the (chocolate) pudding. Enjoy in moderation for Valentine's Day and call us to schedule your infant, child, or adolescent's, dental exam today!

This article is for general information only and is not medical or dental advice. Please seek medical and dental care with you or your child's medical or dental provider for specific questions.



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