

Yes, there is room for chocolate in your diet

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(HealthDay)—Dark chocolate is soothing and satisfying, and it may have health benefits, including some for heart health. But can it fit into a weight-loss diet?

Yes ... if you control portions.

Unsweetened cocoa—the cacao bean product with tons of healthy flavonoids—has only about 12 calories per tablespoon. It makes for a very low-calorie hot chocolate or [chocolate milk](#) when blended with fat-free milk and artificial sweetener.

Adding some pure cocoa to yogurt is also a great way to make your own chocolatey treat, with far fewer calories than dairy-aisle products, which can have as many as a candy bar. Just sprinkle it over the yogurt and use a spatula to fold it in.

Cocoa can also be the flavoring in a homemade gelato, the milk-based Italian frozen dessert that's lower in fat than ice cream. Experiment with recipes to limit the amount of sugar without sacrificing taste.

There are dozens of cocoa brands to choose, many from leading chocolate companies. Just read the labels carefully to be sure there's no added sugar.

If you love the richness of chocolate, dark or bittersweet varieties are considered better for you than semi-sweet because of their higher percentages of cocoa solids and flavonoids. Look for products with "70 percent [cocoa](#)" or higher.

Chocolate has an average of 150 calories per ounce (even with less sugar, these blends still have naturally occurring fat). Measure out one ounce per day to savor.

You can also cut calories by about a third by choosing [chocolate](#) sweetened with stevia, available in bars as well as chips for baking.

More information: Learn more about the benefits of [flavonoids](#) at the

Linus Pauling Institute.

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