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## Regular Chocolate Eaters are Thinner

Katherine Hepburn famously said of her slim physique: “What you see before you is the result of a lifetime of chocolate.” New evidence suggests she may have been right.

Beatrice Golomb, MD, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego, and colleagues present new findings that may overturn the major objection to regular chocolate consumption: that it makes people fat. The study,

showing that adults who eat chocolate on a regular basis are actually thinner than those who don't, will be published online in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* on March 26.

The authors dared to hypothesize that modest, regular chocolate consumption might be calorie-neutral –in other words, that the metabolic benefits of eating modest amounts of chocolate might lead to reduced fat deposition per calorie and approximately offset the added calories (thus rendering frequent, though modest, chocolate consumption neutral with regard to weight). To assess this hypothesis, the researchers examined dietary and other information provided by approximately 1000 adult men and women from San Diego, for whom weight and height had been measured.



*Beatrice Golomb, MD, PhD (right).*

The UC San Diego findings were even more favorable than the researchers conjectured. They found that adults who ate chocolate on more days a week were actually thinner – i.e. had a lower body mass index – than those who ate chocolate less often. The size of the effect was modest but the effect was “significant” –larger than could be explained by chance. This was despite the fact that those who ate chocolate more often did not eat fewer calories (they ate more), nor did they exercise more. Indeed, no differences in behaviors were identified that might explain the finding as a difference in calories taken in versus calories expended.

“Our findings appear to add to a body of information suggesting that the composition of calories, not just the number of them, matters for determining their ultimate impact on weight,” said Golomb. “In the case of chocolate, this is good news –both for those who have a regular chocolate habit, and those who may wish to start one.”

Additional contributors to the study include Sabrina Koperski and Halbert L. White, PhD, of UC San Diego.

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