

## People With Depression Eat More Chocolate, A Mood Food

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**W**omen and men consume more chocolate as the severity of their depression increases. Researchers at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine have found that women and men eat more chocolate as depressive symptoms increase, suggesting an association between mood and chocolate.

Results of this paper, co-authored by Beatrice Golomb, MD, PhD, associate professor of medicine at UCSD School of Medicine, will appear in the April 26 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

“Our study confirms long-held suspicions that eating chocolate is something that people do when they are feeling down,” said Dr. Golomb. “Because it was a cross sectional study, meaning a slice in time, it did not tell us whether the chocolate decreased or intensified the depression.”

Golomb and her colleagues examined the relationship of chocolate consumption to mood in an adult study sample of about 1,000 subjects who were not on antidepressant medications and did not have any known cardiovascular disease or diabetes. Participants were asked questions regarding how many servings of chocolate they ate in a week, and were screened using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) to measure mood.

The researchers found that both men and women who had higher depression scores consumed almost 12 servings of chocolate per month, those with lesser depression scores ate about eight servings of chocolate per month, and those with no depression had five servings per month. No differentiation was made between dark and milk chocolate; a medium serving of chocolate was one ounce, which is slightly less than an average chocolate candy bar.

“The findings did not appear to be explained by a general increase in caffeine, fat, carbohydrate or energy intake, suggesting that our findings are specific to chocolate,” said Golomb. There was also no difference in the consumption of other antioxidant-rich foods, such as fish, coffee, fruits and vegetables between those with depression and those without.

Golomb added that future studies will be required to determine the basis of this association, as well as the role of chocolate in depression, as cause or cure.

Additional contributors are Sabrina Koperski, University of California, San Diego, Department of Medicine, and Natalie Rose, University of California, Davis, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

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