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Prevention: Evidence of Heart Benefits From Chocolate

By NICHOLAS BAKALAR

An analysis of studies including more than 100,000 subjects has found that [high levels of chocolate consumption are associated with a significant reduction in the risk of certain cardiovascular disorders](#).

The seven studies looked at the consumption of a variety of chocolate — candies and candy bars, chocolate drinks, cookies, desserts and nutritional supplements. By many measures, consumption of chocolate was linked to lower rates of stroke, [coronary heart disease](#), [blood pressure](#) and other cardiovascular conditions.

But there was no beneficial effect on the risk for [heart failure](#) or [diabetes](#).

Over all, the report, published Monday in the British medical journal BMJ, showed that those in the group that consumed the most chocolate had decreases of 37 percent in the risk of any cardiovascular disorder and 29 percent in the risk for stroke.

Still, the lead author, Dr. Oscar H. Franco, a lecturer in public health at the University of Cambridge, warned that this finding was not a license to indulge and noted that none of the studies reviewed involved randomized controlled trials.

“Chocolate may be beneficial, but it should be eaten in a moderate way, not in large quantities and not in binges,” he said. “If it is consumed in large quantities, any beneficial effect is going to disappear.”