



HEALTHIER YOU
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5 facts about Chocolate

At Easter, we eat a lot of chocolate Easter eggs. The egg has long been a symbol of 'fertility', 'rebirth' and 'the beginning'. In Egyptian mythology, the phoenix burns its nest to be reborn later from the egg that is left; Hindu scriptures relate that the world developed from an egg. With the rise of Christianity in Western Europe, the church adapted many pagan customs and the egg, as a symbol of new life, came to represent the Resurrection. So the eggs are a symbol of resurrection at Easter. Various types of eggs were used in 1800's (solid metal etc). Chocolate Easter eggs were first made in Europe in the early 19th century, with France and Germany taking the lead in this new artistic confectionery. Some early eggs were solid and now they are made hollow.

Here are 5 fun facts about chocolate

1. Chocolate is one of our oldest foods. It dates back to 1400BC. It has been used as a food additive and a drink for all of this time. The Aztecs called it "*Nahuatl*" but you know it better as chocolate
2. Chocolate (particularly dark chocolate) contains flavanoids which are a type of flavonol. Flavonols are natural compounds found in plants, and these compounds help the plants to fight off toxins and to heal themselves. The flavanoids in chocolate act as natural antioxidants in your body, helping your body's cells to fight damage, and the flavanoids even help with bad cholesterol. But be careful, washing your chocolate down with a glass of milk could prevent the antioxidants being absorbed or used by your body.
3. Chocolate helps brain function. It raises the serotonin levels and endorphins in your brain, which can make you, feel happier. A 2009 study showed that those who drank chocolate cocoa had an easier time counting and doing math. It's all those flavanoids in the chocolate helping the flow of blood to the brain
4. Chocolate is very energy dense. There are a lot of calories in a small amount of chocolate. For the 70kg person, a 60gr chocolate takes 72 minutes to walk off (at 5km/hr). If walking is not your thing, you could choose to ride it off. If you ride your bike at 20km/hr, it would only take 24minutes of solid riding to wear it off. So, too much chocolate will cause you to gain weight, particularly around the abdomen. And when this happens, your risk of diseases like diabetes, heart disease, strokes and cancers goes up
5. To really enjoy and appreciate chocolate, take the time to taste it. Savoir it before you taste it. Smell it first!! Then pop it in your mouth and let it melt. It melts at body temperature and who knows, a little bit might be all you need. Like so many things with it is all about how much chocolate. Remember, as Benjamin Disraeli said: "*The choicest pleasures of life lie within the ring of moderation*"