

MEDICAL**BRIEFS****Health seminar**

Want to live a healthier life? Sure you do. Now Life Health Seminars will present "A Quest for a Healthier You," a free seven-session health seminar 7:30-8:45 p.m. beginning Tuesday, Feb. 13 at the Summit on the Park, 4600 Summit Parkway off Canton Center Road.

Topics include: Diet & Nutrition, Stress Management, Heart Disease, Exercise & Weight Control, Cancer Prevention, and Diabetes. Presenters are Dr. Jason Goliath, a surgical resident at Providence Hospital; Larry Ulery, a specialist in guidance and counseling and teacher of holistic health; and Brenda Schalk, a teacher of medical nutrition therapy. Ulery and Schalk are professors at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich.

To register, call (734) 844-8660.

Nutrition and exercise

Henry Ford Medical Centers in Dearborn and Livonia will offer several classes on nutrition and exercise. Call for times and registration fees.

■ **DASH Diet** - Learn how the entire diet can affect blood pressure rather than just watching sodium intake. Location: Henry Ford Medical Center-Fairlane.

■ **Taking Control: Building a Healthy Lifestyle** - This eight-week weight-control class will help you achieve a realistic weight goal. Location: Henry Ford Medical Center-Livonia. Call (734) 523-1788.

■ **Learning the Diabetic Diet** - A registered dietician will discuss diet, exercise, hypoglycemia, and weight loss to normalize blood glucose for diabetes controlled by diet alone or oral medication. Location: Henry Ford Medical Center-Fairlane. Call (313) 982-8384.

■ **Lowering Blood Cholesterol** - Decrease your fat intake and lower your cholesterol level. Location: Henry Ford Medical Center-Fairlane. Call (313) 982-8384.

■ **Diabetes Education Class** - A five-class series conducted by a nurse, dietician and pharmacist will discuss diabetes management. Location: Henry Ford Medical Center-Fairlane and Henry Ford Medical Center-Livonia.

Henry Ford Medical Center-Fairlane is located at 19401 Hubbard Drive, at Evergreen, in Dearborn. Call (313) 982-8384. Henry Ford Medical Center-Livonia is located at 29200 Schoolcraft, Livonia. Call (734) 523-1788. Call (734) 523-1704 between 6 a.m. and 2 p.m. to register for the diabetes education class at the Livonia center.

Fast ER

Oakwood Healthcare System's 30-Minute Guarantee has been so successful it was expanded to the emergency room at Oakwood Healthcare Center - Canton beginning Jan. 29. The center is located at 7300 Canton Center Road (on the northeast corner of Canton Center and Warren).

Patients seeking treatment in the Center's emergency room will be seen by a physician within 30 minutes of their arrival - guaranteed. If it takes longer than that for care to be initiated, the patient will receive a personal apology and a pair of Star Theatre movie tickets.

At Oakwood Hospital & Medical Center - Dearborn, where the program began last July, just 56 pairs of movie tickets have been given away, a success rate of 99.9 percent. The program is also in effect at Oakwood Annapolis and Oakwood Heritage.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the **Consumer Health & Fitness** staff. The **Standby** section provides numerous avenues for you to offer newsworthy information including Medical Database (depending on calendar events); Medical Newsletters (appointments/new hires in the medical field); and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, consumers).

We also welcome newsworthy items for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

CALL US

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Chocolate!

A little chocolate may be good for your health

BY RENÉE SKOGLUND
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Chocolate has been considered a nutritional villain for years. Those who savored its sweet, lushly palatable taste often did so with guilty feelings. Now comes research that says chocolate may actually be good for you.

Oh, be still my beating heart. "While it has a high amount of saturated fat and calories, there are perceptions about chocolate that aren't true," said Denise Williams, a dietician with Saint Joseph Mercy Health System in Ann Arbor. "A small amount can fit into our lifestyle, and we should enjoy it."

Chocolate is made from the cocoa bean, which grows off the Theobroma cacao tree in the rain forest. It contains several minerals (copper, magnesium, iron and zinc), cocoa butter and a group of phytochemicals called polyphenols. Researchers have begun to study polyphenols for their antioxidant function, the ability to block various hormone actions and processes associated with the development of cancer.

"Research on antioxidants is only in its infancy," said Penny Kris-Etherton, Ph.D.,

the weight."

Fat

According to the American Dietetic Association, chocolate contributes less than two percent of dietary fat consumed in the United States. The majority of dietary fat comes from full-fat dairy products, meats and grain products.

Fortunately for chocolate lovers, not all fat is created equal. The fat in chocolate comes from cocoa butter, which is comprised mainly of palmitic and stearic acid (saturated fats) and oleic acid (monosaturated fat). Each of these fats are present in chocolate in almost equal one-third amounts.

Oleic acid, also found in olive oil, is believed to lower both total cholesterol and LDL (low-density lipoprotein) or "bad" cholesterol. And although past research concluded saturated fatty acids are the most potent plasma cholesterol-raising components, stearic acid has a neutral effect on blood cholesterol.

According to the ADA, a study conducted at Pennsylvania State University concluded that experimental diets containing milk chocolate, in both very high amounts (10 oz./day) and more typical amounts (1.85 oz./day), did not elevate plasma total and LDL cholesterol concentrations.

The study examined 18 healthy men for 26 days while they followed four separate experimental diets, then for another month when they returned to their regular diets.

Other benefits

■ In a study cited by the Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Centers, Harvard researchers found that of 7,800 men who participated, those who ate candy one to three times a month lived longer than those almost never ate candy. Although the researchers didn't ask what kind of candy the men ate, they speculated that many chose chocolate.

■ If chocolate makes your heart go pitter-patter, blame it on the small amount of caffeine and larger amounts of theobromine, both xan-

thine. Chocolate has had a long and flavorful history. Montezuma, the mighty emperor of the Aztecs, served "chocolatl," the royal drink of the realm, to Cortez and his troops in 1619. The Spaniards, upon returning to Europe, sweetened the drink with cane sugar. The first chocolate factory opened in the United States in New England in 1765, and Americans have been eating chocolate ever since ... and feeling guilty.

This Valentine's Day, and all the days that follow, enjoy your chocolate. Just remember to eat it in moderation.

Facts about chocolate

These fun facts about chocolate come from Health Stop, the health education center of Saint Joseph Mercy Health System of Ann Arbor. Health Stop is in Briarwood Mall, just off I-94 at the State Street exit.

1. Although it is high in calories and saturated fat, chocolate is a fun part of a healthy diet in moderate amounts.
2. Chocolate is rich in some of the same antioxidants as tea, which may help protect against heart disease and cancer. One ounce of chocolate has about as many antioxidants as half a cup of brewed black tea.
3. Although chocolate contains highly saturated fat, the fat is made up mostly of stearic acid, which has not been shown to boost blood cholesterol in the same way other saturated fats do.
4. Chocolate does not cause acne!
5. Chocolate is not high in caffeine.
6. Chocolate does not contribute to tooth decay. Although chocolate is sugary, the chocolate clears out of the mouth quickly. Also, cocoa contains substances that may actually inhibit the growth of bacteria in the mouth that lead to plaque formation and cavities.
7. Chocolate makes a delicious dip for cut-up fruits. Try apples, pears, strawberries and bananas.

**Candybar Calories**

Sure, go ahead and have that candy bar. But can you stop at one? That's the trick. Dietitians suggest you buy one candy bar every day, you have to cut the calories somewhere else ... hopefully, not the fruits and vegetables, where else ...

Here's the caloric lowdown on some of our favorite candy bars:

- Butterfinger, 2.1 oz. — 266
- Baby Ruth, 2.1 oz. — 277
- Nestle Crunch, 1.4 oz. — 198
- Hershey 5th Avenue, 2.1 oz. — 294
- Kit Kat, 1.6 oz. — 235
- M&M's Peanuts, 25 peanuts — 242
- Junior Mints, 12 mints — 120
- Chocolate covered almonds, 6-8 — 161
- Bridge mix, 14 pieces — 140

professor of nutrition at Pennsylvania State University. "We already know that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables results in an increase of antioxidants in our blood. We believe chocolate consumption may have the same effect."

Chocolate, particularly dark chocolate, is a rich source of antioxidant plant compounds known as catechins. In fact, the catechin content in chocolate is approximately four times that of tea.

Also, with Valentine's Day this week, it's nice to know that a 1.5 oz. bar of milk chocolate contains about the same amount of polyphenol antioxidants as a glass of red wine.

So, do we ask our sweethearts to forget the flowers and bring on the chocolate? Not quite. Flowers don't have calories. A Butterfinger candy bar has 266.

"I think the bottom line when we add chocolate to our diet is the calories," said Gail Cox, a registered dietician with the Eastern Health Development Network. "If we decide to add a chocolate bar to our daily intake, it's only a matter of time before we gain

These substances, which are quickly absorbed by the body, mildly stimulate the central nervous system, speeding up your heart and increasing your alertness. However, the extra stimulant is not enough to cost you sleep.

■ Don't worry about your sweet tooth. Chocolate seems to contain an antibacterial agent that inhibits plaque formation.

■ It's what chefs call the "mouth feel." Pop a piece of chocolate in your mouth and savor that full, velvety feeling that floods your palate and gums. "It's melting at your body temperature, 98.6°F, that's why it's so wonderful," said Williams.

Sensible Substitutions

- Sure you can have your cake and eat it, too. Give these substitutions a try:
- For each ounce of sweetened chocolate, substitute 4 tablespoons cocoa powder, 2 tablespoons brown sugar, and 6 tablespoons evaporated skim milk. "It's one of the best inventions around," said dietician Beth Williams.
 - Substitute evaporated skim milk for cream.
 - Substitute low-fat cream cheese for regular cream cheese.
 - Substitute skim milk for whole milk.
 - Substitute plain yogurt for sour cream.
 - Substitute two egg whites for one whole egg.
 - Substitute 1/4 cup of egg substitute for one whole egg.
 - Use diet margarine.
 - Use half the amount of chocolate chips in a recipe.

