Chocolate’s Health Benefits
In the last few years, the myth that chocolate has no nutritional value has been shown to be false. Dark chocolate, when consumed in moderation and within one’s recommended daily calorie requirements, actually has many health promoting effects.

- Chocolate is a rich source of magnesium, copper, iron and zinc.
- Chocolate contains polyphenols and flavonoids, which are rich sources of antioxidants—and cocoa flavonoids are more powerful antioxidants than those found in black tea, green tea, red wine or apples!
- The abundance of nutrients and antioxidants in chocolate can help explain why moderate consumption has been linked to heart health, reduced inflammation, increase cognitive function and decreased risk of hypertension.

Tips for Choosing Chocolate
To reap the health benefits of chocolate make sure to read labels. Presented below are two real-world labels to show not all chocolate is equal. Remember these 3 tips next time you’re at the store:

(1) For the most benefit, choose chocolate that has cocoa mass or cocoa liquor listed as the first ingredient. The first listed ingredient on foods represents the most abundant item. Cocoa mass and cocoa liquor both contain the beneficial antioxidants found in chocolate.

(2) Look for dark chocolate with 70% or greater cocoa, which studies have shown to have higher health-promoting properties.

(3) Try to limit chocolate products containing artificial flavors or ingredients. These type of ingredients often indicate less cocoa is included and more processing was required. The more chocolate is processed, the less beneficial health properties remain.
Cooking with Dark Chocolate

Dark chocolate, particularly artisinal chocolates, are popular with chocolate lovers for their unique flavor profile and decadent taste, but selecting dark chocolate for cooking requires special consideration.

Helpful baking tips— from cookies to pudding:

1. Avoid using fancy artisanal chocolate. The qualities you love when consumed at room temperature will not survive the oven.

2. Select chocolate with greater than 35% cocoa/cacao.


4. Select chocolate with less than 50% sugar to avoid “too-sweet” taste.

5. Be mindful of sugar to cocoa solids ratio for puddings. Ratio determines if pudding is “drippy/runny” or “clumpy.” The more sugar, the more “runny.”

6. Chocolates containing milk fat are ideal for truffles and glazes due to lower and wider melting point.

HAPPY BAKING!