



## Focus on Nutrition

### 5 ways to add more nutrients to your lifestyle

A nutritious diet is crucial for overall health and well-being. While it's OK to indulge from time to time, it's important to make sure you're providing your body with appropriate nourishment.

There are many ways to help you add more of the essential nutrients you need into everyday meals, including these nutritious ideas from CocoaVia.

#### Sneak in More Fruits and Vegetables.

You can bulk up the nutritional value of nearly any meal by incorporating fruits or vegetables directly into your recipes. Pureeing veggies is a good way to disguise textures or flavors you might typically avoid. For example, celery is a natural flavor enhancer for many types of broth soup. Adding finely pureed celery to the stock will add the flavor without the crunchy bits. You can also slip vegetables like spinach or carrots into smoothies, and depending on the base and fruit, you may never even taste them. Fresh, canned or frozen, fruit can give a boost of nutrition to dishes like oatmeal or pudding. You can also use purees (think applesauce) as a low-fat substitute for eggs and oil in baked goods like cake.

#### Go Frozen.

Fresh fruits and vegetables provide a wealth of essential vitamins and nutrients, but you may be surprised that their frozen counterparts do the same. Frozen foods are often perceived as less nutritious, but they can contain just as many nutrients as fresh produce. In fact, since freezing often involves picking the food at its peak and then quickly freezing it, freezing can actually help retain vitamins more efficiently than refrigeration or canning; frozen vegetables can actually hold on to nutrients longer than fresh produce and are a great alternative when seasonal fruits and vegetables are unavailable. In many cases, frozen veggies also make it easy to experiment with better-for-you meals because the cleaning and prep work is already done. You can try adding them to soups, stir-fries, casseroles and even pasta dishes.

#### Cook Quickly.

If you've historically shied away from cooked vegetables, you may find that proper preparation is the secret ingredient. Not only does overcooking veggies deplete their flavor, in most cases it also diminishes their nutritional value. Cook veggies lightly and quickly using methods like stir-frying or steaming to help retain water-soluble nutrients like vitamins B and C.

#### Get Saucy.

You may think of dishes covered in rich gravy or sauce as unhealthy, and in some cases, you would be right. However, it's actually quite possible to create saucy dishes that taste terrific.

Both tomato sauce and pesto add nutrients and can top pretty much anything, from pastas to grilled chicken. Tomato sauce contains lycopene, a bright plant pigment known as a carotenoid that has been linked to a range of health benefits. Pesto is traditionally made with healthy pine nuts and basil, but you can also get creative and prepare this light sauce alternative with options such as arugula, spinach and heart-healthy walnuts or pecans.

#### Consider Cocoa Flavanols.

Another option to consider adding to your diet is cocoa flavanols. These plant-based phytonutrients are found naturally in cocoa, and research supports that these flavanols work within your body to help maintain healthy blood flow. While chocolate, including dark chocolate and natural (non-alkalized) cocoa powder, can be sources of cocoa flavanols, they are often not a reliable source of cocoa flavanols. The way cocoa is handled matters in the retention of these phytonutrients. However, one easy way to add cocoa flavanols to your routine is by incorporating a daily cocoa extract supplement, such as CocoaVia, which contains the highest concentration available in a cocoa extract supplement today. The supplement can be added to the food or beverage of your choice, like a Chocolate-Chai Smoothie or coffee. Visit [CocoaVia.com](http://CocoaVia.com) for more information about cocoa flavanols and ideas for adding them to your diet.

#### Chocolate-Chai Smoothie

Makes: 1 smoothie

- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 chai-flavored tea bag
- 1/2 cup fat-free milk
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ice cubes
- 1 packet CocoaVia Unsweetened Dark Chocolate (or Sweetened Dark Chocolate) supplement

In measuring cup with pour spout, pour boiling water over tea bag. Let steep 5 minutes; remove tea bag.

Pour milk and tea into

blender; add honey, a handful of ice and cocoa extract supplement. Cover and blend until smooth.

Nutritional information per serving: 130 calories; 1 g total fat; 50 mg sodium; 27 g carbohydrates; 1 g dietary fiber; 24 g sugar; 5 g protein; 375 mg cocoa flavanols.

#### The Truth About Chocolate

While there are many misconceptions about chocolate, especially when it comes to its health benefits, these facts from the experts at CocoaVia set the record straight on some of the most common chocolate myths.

#### 1. Chocolate contains powerful antioxidants.

Chocolate, particularly dark chocolate, does contain cocoa flavanols, phytonutrients which numerous scientific studies have demonstrated have a positive impact on health. However, cocoa flavanols are not antioxidants. While not antioxidants, cocoa flavanols have been shown to have positive effects on health that are linked to their ability to support the health and function of your blood vessels.

#### 2. Chocolate is good for your heart.

Chocolate can be part of a healthy diet, but it is not a health food. Even if chocolate is high in cocoa flavanols, the calories, fat and sugar leave it best-suited as an occasional indulgence.

#### 3. Chocolate containing 70 percent cacao or greater is good for you.

The percentage of cacao is not a reliable indicator of a product's cocoa flavanol content. Unfortunately, there is also no way of knowing exactly how many cocoa flavanols are in a conventional chocolate product because traditional cocoa processing, which includes fermenting, drying and roasting of beans, destroys many of the flavanols naturally present in the cocoa bean.

#### 4. Chocolate is high in caffeine.

Chocolate does contain caffeine, but an average 1-ounce serving of dark chocolate contains less than half the amount of caffeine found in an average cup of black tea. The amount of caffeine in chocolate is in proportion to the percentage of cacao in the product, meaning milk chocolate contains less caffeine than semi-sweet or dark chocolate.

Content courtesy of CocoaVia

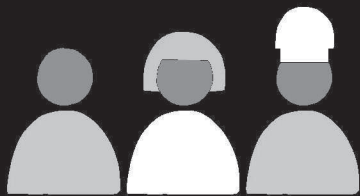
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Source: CocoaVia



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