



Flavanols: Chocolate's Best Kept Secret

Want a reason to eat a little dark chocolate every week? Now you have one, thanks to flavanols! Flavanols are a nutrient found naturally in cocoa beans that can provide us with a number of heart health benefits while still enjoying a sweet treat!

The Benefits of Being a Chocoholic

- ♥ Flavanols have been shown to help **lower blood pressure** and **improve blood flow to the brain and heart** which may help **reduce the risk of heart disease**
- ♥ **The darker, the better!** Dark chocolate has higher amounts of flavanols because it contains more cocoa (where flavanols come from) than milk chocolate
 - ♥ Look for chocolate with **at least 70% cocoa**—the higher the percentage, the less added sugar there is (We love 85%)!
- ♥ **Don't forget about calories!** Even though dark chocolate has heart health benefits, it's still a high calorie food. Stick to a ~0.5 oz serving a few times a week. Here are our favorite dark chocolates to try (all equal to ~0.5 oz)
 - ♥ **Dove Promises Dark Chocolate (2 pieces)**
 - ♥ **Hershey's Special Dark Minis (2 pieces)**
 - ♥ **Lindt Extra Dark Bar 85% (1 ½ squares)**

Where else are flavanols found?

- ♥ Dark chocolate isn't the only food that contains flavanols! Some other great (and healthy) sources of flavanols are:

♥ Apples	♥ Tea (especially green)
♥ Grapes	♥ Pears
- ♥ Try our recipe for chocolate covered fruit pops **using apples** to double your intake of flavanols!

Recipe of the Month

Chocolate Covered Fruit Pops!

Servings: 8 pops
Total time: 35 min
Ingredients:



- Fresh fruit. Try some of our favorites:
 - Banana—1/2 per pop
 - Large strawberries—3-4 per pop
 - Apple-- ~3 inch slice, 1 per pop
 - Pineapple—see above, 3-4 pieces
- 8 Popsicle sticks or chop sticks cut in half
- 4oz dark chocolate, at least 70% cocoa
 - Can be chips, morsels, and/or bar

Optional:

- 1 Tablespoon Coconut Oil
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts and/or peanuts

Preparation:

1. Push fruit onto sticks to make your pops.
2. Lay them on a plate, cover with plastic wrap and place in the freezer for 30 minutes.
3. When the timer is almost up on the fruit in the freezer combine chocolate and coconut oil in a microwave safe bowl.
4. Microwave 15 second at a time, stirring well in between, until melted and well combined (about 1 minute).
5. Allow chocolate to cool for 3 minutes.
6. Holding the stick, dip pops in the chocolate.
7. Roll pops in chopped nuts quickly before the chocolate hardens—ENJOY!

Nutrition Facts 1 pop & nuts, varies with fruit
Energy: 165Cal **Fat:** 10.5g **Carb:** 18g
Fiber: 3g **Sugar:** 11g **Protein:** 2g
* Strawberry is lowest energy, carb, & sugar*

Our Dietitians



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