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Analysis: Chocolate may reduce stroke risk

By Mary Brophy Marcus, USA TODAY

Just in time for Valentine's Day, research out this week suggests eating chocolate may have a positive impact on stroke. Don't go buying too many heart boxes just yet, though, say the study authors.

A new analysis, which involved a review of three prior studies, suggests eating about a bar of chocolate a week can help cut the risk of stroke and lower the risk of death after a stroke. But the evidence is still limited, says study author, neurologist Gustavo Saposnik at [St. Michael's Hospital, University of Toronto](#).

"This is something that requires further investigation," Saposnik says.

One study they looked at found that 44,489 people who ate one serving of chocolate per week were 22% less likely to have a stroke than people who ate no chocolate. Another study found that 1,169 people who ate 50 grams of chocolate once a week were 46% less likely to die following a stroke than people who didn't eat chocolate.

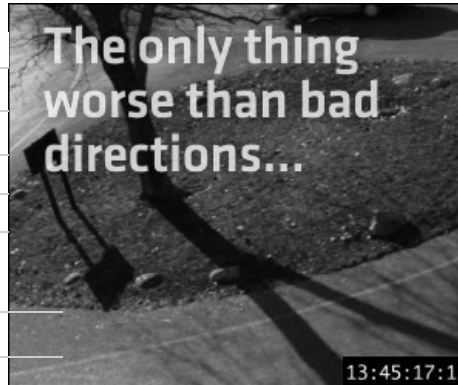
The research appears in this week's *Neurology* and will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 62nd annual meeting in Toronto in April.

Saposnik says future studies need to address which component in chocolate, the amount, and what kind — white, milk or dark — makes a difference.

New chocolate-stroke studies should also take into account age and gender of consumers, says Italo Mocchetti, a professor in the Department of Neuroscience at [Georgetown University](#) Medical Center. Mocchetti, who has studied flavonoids, says this chemical, which is found in cocoa, is linked to anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.

The chocolate-health connection is something many clients are interested in, says Katrina Markoff, owner of the premium chocolate line Vosges.

"We get a lot of customers that come in who only want to eat dark chocolate because they believe that it helps their health — everyone speaks in cocoa percentages now," Markoff says. "This generation is really interested in super foods."



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