



## Fitness Motivation Monitor

Fitness Information and Inspiration



No guilt. No grief. Just results!

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### *Achieving Physical Wealth*



"An amazing book that is empowering and a total fitness compliment."

### More on Chocolate

If you ate chocolate on Valentine's Day, I have some news for you. You don't have to feel guilty.

In fact, I have evidence that you may have cut your risk from dying of a stroke nearly in half.

Two studies give us great news about chocolate. The first study found that people who ate one serving of chocolate per week were 22% less likely to have a stroke.

The second study found that people who ate 50 grams of chocolate once a week were 46% less likely to die following a stroke than those who didn't eat chocolate.

About 80% of strokes occur when there isn't enough blood getting to the brain. Your brain is starved of oxygen and nutrients and begins to die immediately.

Chocolate helps to counteract that in two ways. It's rich in antioxidants and helps to increase circulation.

You may get a rush of pleasure when you bite into a piece of chocolate. But chocolate gives you more than instant gratification. Chocolate is filled with antioxidants called flavonoids. Flavonoids protect the body. Flavonoids fight silent inflammation, which is the leading cause of chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, dementia, and many others.

You can find flavonoids in vegetables, tea, and red wine, but cocoa has more flavonoids. In fact, dark chocolate contains up to four times the antioxidants found in tea.

But that's not all this Valentine's Day treat can do. The flavonol-rich cocoa in chocolate is also a vasodilator. It widens blood vessels so circulation is improved. This brings an increased blood flow to the brain. It helps to lower blood pressure and improve heart function.

Vasodilators like the cocoa in chocolate also help to increase circulation to sexual organs so they're ready to respond when you are. No wonder the scientific name for cocoa translates to "food of the gods."

When you're looking for a good source of chocolate, keep this in mind:

- Look for chocolate that contains 70% or more cocoa. This is the ingredient that contains health benefits.
- Check how much sugar is added to the chocolate you choose. Keep it as low as possible. But choose sugar over artificial sweeteners or chocolate labeled "sugar free."

~ Diana Lipson Burge ~  
Registered Dietician and  
Co-Author of "Un-Dieting"

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- Beware of other chemicals in the chocolate. Choose a brand that has pure ingredients and no chemical additives.
- Make chocolate your special treat of choice once a week.
- You can find good quality chocolate at a health-food store. More and more it's finding its way into grocery and drug stores. Read the label to be sure of the quality and content.

Article by [Al Sears, MD](#)

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### Message From Heather

Okay, maybe I'm over-indulging in the chocolate theme this year, but the article was too good not to share it with you. With so many benefits, chocolate, in it's recommended form, is a great treat that I find very satisfying. Dark, rich 70% cocoa can make me feel like I'm truly enjoying one of the finer (and all too often, forbidden) things in life without the guilt!



So, go ahead. Indulge! And know that you are improving your heart health, lowering your cholesterol, and fighting cancer, stroke and dementia.

In health,  
*Heather Moreno*



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### Marvelous Mushroom Soup

Portobello, white button, and porcini mushrooms come together in this rich and versatile soup. Make it as a hearty appetizer or serve it next to a salad or sandwich for the perfect meal pairing. These varieties are rich in antioxidants and feature potassium, selenium and B-vitamins.

2 cups boiling water (for dried mushrooms)  
1 (2-oz.) package dried porcini mushrooms  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 Tbsp. unsalted butter  
4 cups sliced yellow onions  
1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped (set aside 1 Tbsp. for garnish)  
2 sprigs of thyme  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
8 oz. Portobello mushroom caps, chopped (about 4 cups)  
3 (8-oz.) packages pre-sliced white button mushrooms  
5 cups fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth  
1 bay leaf  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
1/4 cup 2% milk  
1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream



Combine boiling water and porcini in bowl. Cover and let stand 30 minutes or until tender.

Heat oil and butter in large stockpot over medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté 5 minutes. Add parsley, thyme sprigs and garlic and sauté 5 minutes. Add Portobello and button mushrooms. Cook 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add porcini mixture, broth and bay leaf. Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes. Stir in salt and black pepper and let stand 5 minutes. Remove thyme sprigs and bay leaf.

Place 1/4 of mushroom mixture in a blender and process until smooth. Pour pureed soup into large bowl. Repeat procedure with remaining mushroom mixture. Fold in milk until blended and creamy.

Serve, garnished with fresh parsley and sour cream.

Makes 8 servings.

Per serving: 150 calories, 6 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 16 g carbohydrate,  
7 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 340 mg sodium.

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