

BRAIN Waves

DECEMBER 2024



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Quote of The Month ...

*"Gifts of time and love
are surely the basic
ingredients of a truly
Merry Christmas."*

~ Peg Bracken

Leah's Notes ...



Leah Zehel, Director

Merry Christmas to all our family and friends!

Its that wonderful time of year again which goes hand in hand with a lot of unwanted stress, trying to get your shopping done, the many gatherings, and often the memories of people that we have loved and have now lost start flooding in. I want to wish for all of you that this time of year you will find peace and find time to reflect on all your blessings that surround you. When someone you love is suffering from dementia this season can be particularly hard. Here are just a couple ideas that may help ease

some of the stress that comes from the changes in schedules and business this time of year.

- When attending gatherings or having company let your visitor know what to expect. Family and friends should be aware of the changes they may see and encourage them to be patient and respectful.
- For some individual's pets can be the ideal companion to keep your loved one grounded and calm during the holidays. Studies have shown that pets help decrease stress, lower blood pressure, ease pain, and enhance social interaction.
- Plan your dinners earlier. When dealing with memory loss dinner or late afternoon is not the best time of day, consider having a

brunch or lunch instead.

- Keep you sense of humor! Give yourself permission to laugh and stay calm. Say no when you need to and designate a "quiet room" for your loved one where they can have a break from the group or the festivities.
- Shift your perspective. Find ways to change a negative into a positive, find new opportunities rather than just focusing on the losses.

We all have the power to count our blessings, research suggests that we have three times more positive experiences then negative however we often fail to remember the blessings and give to much importance to the problems in our life. Memory loss cannot steal your spirit!!

Blessed Christmas to All! ■



TGP Special Events & Activities

Families always welcome to our Entertainment Events!

- December 2** *Music with Duo-Over*
- December 4** *Music with Tom Luke*
- December 5** *Music with Sound Celebration- All Families and Friends are Invited!!*
- December 10** *Line Dancing with Diana*
- December 11** *Outing to SPARKS*
- December 16** *Music with the Golden Chordaliers- All Families and Friends are Invited!!*
- December 17**
 - *Music with Kohler Madrigal*
 - *Music with the Dave Ross Christmas Show All Families and Friends are Invited!!*
- December 18**
 - *Music with Random Lake Chamber Singers*
 - *Music with Jim Rosetti*
- December 19**
 - *History with Linda*
 - *Music with Rob Peterson*
- December 30** *You be the Judge*





Memory Minute

By Leah Zehel

This past month we talked about healthy habits; these are not easy. But we all seemed to enjoy this habit, the habit of eating dark chocolate! This is one we could all get on board with 😊 Here is why:

1. Very nutritious

If you buy quality dark chocolate with a high cocoa content, then it's quite nutritious.

It contains a decent amount of soluble fiber and is loaded with minerals.

A 100-gram bar of dark chocolate with 70–85% cocoa contains:

- 11 grams of fiber
- 66% of the DV for iron
- 57% of the DV for magnesium
- 196% of the DV for copper
- 85% of the DV for manganese

2. Powerful source of antioxidants

ORAC stands for oxygen radical absorbance capacity. It's a measure of the antioxidant activity of foods.

Basically, researchers set a bunch of free radicals (bad) against a sample of a food and see how well the antioxidants in the food can disarm the free radicals.

Based on these studies, chocolate is considered rich in antioxidants.

Memory Matters Calendar

December 5 You be the Judge.

December 12 Art Class with Linda

December 19 Christmas Party! Music with Dan Ognevic

December 26 Closed Merry Christmas

3. May improve blood flow and lower blood pressure

The flavonoids in dark chocolate can stimulate the endothelium, the lining of arteries, to produce nitric oxide.

One of the functions of NO is to send signals to the arteries to relax, which lowers the resistance to blood flow and therefore reduces blood pressure.

Many controlled studies show that cocoa and dark chocolate can improve blood flow and lower blood pressure.

However, one study in people with type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure showed no effect, so take this with a grain of salt. It's possible that people who are already receiving treatment for high blood pressure may not get any additional benefit from adding cocoa flavanols to their diet.

Dark chocolate is loaded with organic compounds that are biologically active and function as antioxidants. These include polyphenols, flavanols and catechins, among others. According to research, the polyphenols in dark chocolate may help lower some forms of LDL ("bad") cholesterol when combined with other foods like almonds and cocoa.

One study showed that cocoa and dark chocolate had more antioxidant activity, polyphenols, and flavanols than any other fruits tested, which included blueberries and acai berries.

4. May reduce heart disease risk

The compounds in dark chocolate appear to be highly protective against the oxidation of LDL.

In the long term, this should cause much less cholesterol to lodge in the arteries, resulting in a

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lower risk of heart disease.

Over time, a number of studies have shown that consuming flavanol-rich cocoa or chocolate can lower blood pressure and improve cardiovascular health.

In fact, research show a drastic improvement.

Over time, a number of studies have shown that consuming flavanol-rich cocoa or chocolate can lower blood pressure and improve cardiovascular health.

Another review suggested that eating 45 grams of chocolate per week lowers cardiovascular disease risk by 11%. Consuming more than 100 grams per week does not appear to produce health benefits.

A 2017 clinical trial found that subjects who consumed almonds with or without dark chocolate showed improved LDL cholesterol levels.

Although all of these findings are promising, more evidence is needed to know if it was the chocolate that reduced the risk.

However, since the biological process is known (lower blood pressure and lower oxidization-prone LDL), it's plausible that regularly eating dark chocolate may reduce the risk of heart disease.

5. Could improve brain function

The good news isn't over yet. Dark chocolate may also improve the function of your brain.

Studies show that eating high flavanol cocoa can improve blood flow to the brain in young adults. This may explain why eating cocoa daily appears to improve attention, verbal learning, and memory.

Cocoa flavonoids may also help maintain cognitive function in older adults with mild cognitive impairment and reduce the chance of progressing to dementia. But more research is needed.

Additionally, cocoa contains stimulant substances like caffeine and theobromine, which may be a key reason why it can improve brain function in the short term.

The bottom line

There is considerable evidence that cocoa can provide powerful health benefits, being especially protective against heart disease.

Of course, this doesn't mean you should go all out and consume lots of chocolate every day. It's still loaded with calories and easy to overeat.

Maybe have a square or two after dinner and try to savor them.

Choose quality stuff: dark chocolate with 70% or higher cocoa content. ■

