

# Chocolate - Superfood or Poison?



by Alicia Hall

Everybody is talking about chocolate: dark chocolate, milk chocolate, raw chocolate. Chocolate has long been seen as delicious, exciting, erotic and sensual. In fact, the excitement over raw chocolate makes one believe that people cannot live without it and must indulge to become super healthy and happy.

Chocolate has been labelled as nature's Viagra, an aphrodisiac, a superfood, the number-one weight loss and high-energy food, a craving alleviator, non-addictive, a mood elevator, nature's Prozac, and, in the case of raw chocolate (cacao), free from hydrogenated fats, dairy, wheat and gluten - and, of course, vegan. It is touted as packed with antioxidants, containing over 300 chemically identifiable compounds, and the list goes on. Statements such as eat less, lose weight and live more, heal and open your heart, alleviate depression, increase your sensuality and beauty, double your joy, nourish your brain and accelerate your nutrition lead many to partake of this elixir with a false sense of security.

No doubt every human on earth would love to reap these benefits from one recreational food. But is this possible? If you were to ask researchers, Dr. Paul Crawford and Dr. Michael Simmons, they would point to their findings (reported in the *Journal of Family Practice* 2006; 55:62) exposing a direct link between migraines and chocolate consumption.

To be fair to the bean, it is packed with antioxidants, sulphur (beauty mineral), magnesium (brain mineral), monomine oxidase enzyme inhibitors (mao - neurotransmitters), phenylethylamine (PEA - mood elevator), anandamide (the bliss chemical), arginine (nature's Viagra), tryptophan (anti-depressant amino acid), polyphenols and epicatechins (antioxidants), dopamine and serotonin (anti-depressant neurotransmitters), flavonol antioxidants, B vitamins and histamine. Yet there are

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many foods or substances that offer benefits and at the same time enhance health. One of the multiple concerns with chocolate consumption is that chocolate is always combined with sweetening agents, and even raw agave syrup will affect one's blood sugar levels just as other sugars do. According to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, soda pop and chocolate are the two most commonly named pleasures in which diabetics indulge.

It has come to my attention that a very poisonous deadly chemical that should never be ingested is also present in this innocent looking cacao bean - caffeine. Caffeine is a noxious chemical that destroys nutrients and raises the impurity level of the blood. (See "A Boost with a Big Price" for the devastating effects of caffeine). It also harbours theophylline, which has similar destructive effects. This alone should immediately ring alarm bells

and put people off from eating chocolate, whether raw or cooked, but their addiction to this narcotic called chocolate prevents them from doing so. Many will announce that if caffeine is raw, it is OK to eat. But let me warn you, it is not. I know this from professional and personal experience.

As a former sugar addict, I decided that I was missing out on the raw chocolate phenomenon that has been sweeping the health community. Trying to conquer my addiction, I decided to make my own sugarless concoction. I omitted the agave syrup that is so often used and set about making an unadulterated raw chocolate. I proudly made my first batch and put the thick, sensual substance into moulds. It tasted great before I chilled it, and more so once chilled. So far, so good. It had no effect on my blood sugar levels, or so I thought. My energy spiked and I decided that one piece of raw chocolate every day was just what I needed. However, after day three I noticed that I wanted to increase the small portion of chocolate that I allowed myself. Then I realized I was thinking about eating it throughout the day. I became very agitated and was unable to sleep at night. My sugar levels began to rise and fall and I realised that if I did not get this seductive treat out of my life, the caffeine would recapture my addictive tendency. Even though I knew that this food was bad for my health, I still craved it. I took drastic measures, threw away the chocolate and fasted. It took three to four days of consuming exclusively green juice before I felt my normal sunny self. I perceived that I had become aggressive yet withdrawn and very hyperactive whilst ingesting raw

caffeine. Please take heed and learn from my experience – it is not worth risking your health for the sake of a quick high. If you believe that you are not affected in the same way, perhaps you are fooling yourself, since every analytical person who partakes of this enticing nectar inevitably begins to “fall in love” with it.

Well-known raw foodist Frederic Patenaude describes cacao as another stimulant disguised as a healthy food. This is very true. He suggests carob as an alternative to cacao. Carob powder is made from a fruit and is a mineral-rich food, as opposed to the cacao bean, which has a stimulating effect. Cacao beans are not really a food. If you came upon this plant in nature, you would consume the fruit and most likely discard the seeds. When consumed, they do not even vaguely taste like raw cacao, let alone the sugary candy we grew up loving. In the process of making them more palatable, the cacao beans are fermented and then, of course, a multitude of other ingredients, (topping the list is some form of sugar) are added to this substance. Those living food advocates promoting cacao are misleading the public by suggesting that such sweeteners as agave syrup are lower glycemic and not as harmful as commonly known culprits such as sugar, corn syrup, honey and maple syrup. All sugars have the inherent propensity to affect blood-sugar levels and promote disease.

*Diet by Design: Fruits, Nuts and Natural Foods* offers insight into chocolate and coco... by exposing some of its ingredients. There are chemicals within chocolate known as methylxanthines which can be further classified as theobromine, caffeine and theophylline, all of which have deleterious effects on the body. These substances cause a host of symptoms including abnormal glandular growth, nervousness, depression, anxiety, insomnia, gastrointestinal problems, itching, heart and circulatory issues,



nervous disorders, osteoporosis, birthing abnormalities, stomach maladies nausea and vomiting. Further, all three are classed as notorious carcinogens (cancer-causing agents). A carcinogenic mould called aflatoxin has been found in large quantities on cacao beans. Cocoa butter and other active ingredients in processed and raw chocolate provoke acne outbreaks and dermal infection in a great number of consumers.

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As soon as the cacao beans are processed into powder and chocolate, sanitation is at risk. Chocolate and cocoa powder are particularly likely to be laced with animal feces, hair and insects. Other creatures, including rodents and insects, are attracted to chocolate to feed their addictions and it has been long understood that there would be an astronomical cost involved in removing their excretions and remains from the unprocessed chocolate beans. Governments around the world have unconscionably permitted up to ten percent by weight of this vile matter to be part of any finished product such as chocolate candy, cocoa, chocolate syrup, brownie and cake mixes and the like. Following is a quote from *Poison with a Capitol C*: “...every time you eat a chocolate bar, it may contain a rodent hair and 16 insect parts and still be approved” as an edible food and “for chocolate powder or cakes there must not be more than 75 insect fragments in three tablespoons of powder.” Additionally, “4% of cacao beans may be infested by insects. Animal excreta must not exceed 10 milligrams per pound.” What more can one say! All this comes with the blessing of governments worldwide.

It is assumed that those of you reading this manifesto against chocolate are also serious health-seekers who probably desire a little fun in your life. Providing that you are not currently in the conquest of disease, there is a wide cross-section of tropical fruits, scrumptious berries, creamy delights like avocado, cherimoya, sapote (black sapote has been dubbed “the chocolate pudding fruit”), mamey, and

nuts and seeds that can be ground and homogenized into delicious delicacies with pure stevia added as a health-building sweetener. This gathering, along with other real foods, contains all the beneficial elements that chocolate is said to provide. As a matter of fact, some of the tropical fruits and berries possess far more antioxidants, phytochemicals, disease preventers and anti-aging agents than cocoa beans. Most important is that you can realize superior health without compromise. In life, it is important that we live with integrity and do not squander our precious time on earth.

The simple fact is that raw chocolate, or any other food that contains any form of caffeine or stimulant, is very detrimental to your health. It is a false food – PERIOD. It is as simple as that. Keep away from these poisons and do not try to justify to yourself or others why you feel that you need to consume foods with stimulants, putrid debris and carcinogens. Just realize and understand that good health comes from consuming a clean, wholesome, living raw food vegan diet and by expressing love and compassion on a daily basis. This is your body and your life: Look after it, since it is the only one you have. Be assured that a positive outlook, eating a healthy living-food diet and enjoying life with passion will make you sparkle with vitality. No chocolate needed.



Wishing you health and happiness,

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