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Fiber fans and faux chocolate addictions

[Why Your Belly is Fat](#)

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Pandemic overweight is, as that very phrase implies, a problem that is in no way confined to the United States. It is causing a stir in Europe as well, and provoking all manner of weight- and diet-related research. For example:

At the University of Granada in Spain, they are extolling the virtues of [high fiber consumption](#) as a valuable aid in weight reduction that works on several fronts. First, fiber-rich foods, being extremely...well...fibrous, take more time and energy to chew and swallow; the energy burns calories, the time slows down the overall food intake.

Second, high-fiber foods are also generally high-volume, meaning they take up more stomach space, which creates a feeling of fullness sooner and with less caloric downloading. And finally, if less delicately, fiber hastens the passage of food through the intestines, meaning that less of it is absorbed to become added body weight.

The Granada researchers also determined that one chocolate cookie per day, added to an otherwise calorically-balanced diet, can add five pounds per year to a typical child. This may not be groundbreaking news, but it does provide a handy segue to research reported by the University of Bristol in England that debunks the notion that one can be addicted to chocolate.

Calling yourself an addict only makes you feel better

Self-described "chocoholics" are [no such thing](#), say the Bristol folks. The reality is that we merely like to invoke the addiction notion as an excuse to indulge ourselves.



In point of fact, the elements in chocolate that we like to cite as pharmacologically addictive — your basic serotonin, tryptophan, phenylethylamine, tyramine and cannabinoids — are present in greater amounts and concentrations in various other food items that we are quite able to take or leave alone without feelings of great temptation or withdrawal.

Moreover, milk chocolate and chocolate-covered candy, which have less of these supposedly mood-elevating chemicals, consistently outsell dark chocolate, which has more of them. The attraction clearly is not just physiological.

According to the researchers, we're in the grip of a psychological disconnect. We love chocolate and would dearly enjoy eating all we could hold, but do not allow ourselves to, and we view that gap between desire and prudence as a craving, which we incorrectly interpret as a symptom of an addiction.

The fact is, say the Bristol crowd, if we're craving anything, it's not chocolate's modest traces of tyramine or serotonin but its main ingredients: sugar and fat.

Unfortunately, there's nothing romantic sounding about, "I'm a hopeless sugar and fat addict."

(By Robert S. Wieder for CalorieLab Calorie Counter News)

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