

Eating chocolates can help you shed flab, claim scientists

London: Chocoholics rejoice! Eating lots of chocolate could help you lose weight, scientists claim, disproving the old belief that the sweet treat is fattening.

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Researchers from the University of Granada, Spain have scientifically have shown that higher consumption of chocolate is associated with lower levels of total fat (fat deposited all over the body) and central fat (abdominal), independently of whether or not the individual participates in regular physical activity and of diet, among other factors.

The researchers determined whether greater chocolate consumption was associated with higher body mass index and other indicators of total and central body fat in adolescents participating in a study. The study involved 1458 adolescents aged between 12 and 17 years and results showed that a higher level of chocolate consumption associated with lower levels of total and central fat when these were estimated through body mass index, body fat percentage, measured by both skin folds and bio-electrical impedance analysis, and waist circumference.

These results were independent of the participant's sex, age, sexual maturation, total energy intake, intake of saturated fats, fruit and vegetables, consumption of tea and coffee, and physical activity.

Although chocolate is considered a high energy content food—it is rich in sugars and saturated fats - "recent studies in adults suggest chocolate consumption is associated with a lower risk of cardio metabolic disorders," principle author Magdalena Cuenca-Garcia said.

Chocolate is rich in flavonoids – especially catechins—which have many healthy properties, researchers said.

"They have important antioxidant, antithrombotic, anti-inflammatory and antihypertensive effects and can help prevent ischemic heart disease," said researchers.

Recently, another cross-sectional study in adults conducted by University of California researchers found that more frequent chocolate consumption also associated with a lower body mass index.

What's more, these results were confirmed in a longitudinal study in women who followed a catechin-rich diet.

The effect could be partly due to the influence of catechins on cortisol production and on insulin sensitivity, both of which are related with overweight and obesity.
The study was published in the journal Nutrition.

(Agencies)

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