

# Total Nutrition

## Forbidden No More "Bad" Foods Gone Good

(NAPSA)—Once in a while, a food that has been pooh-poohed for how it affects health is given a reprieve. So it goes for three foods as of late: chocolate, nuts and eggs. Recent research suggests these foods are not harmful to health and may in fact have some redeeming values. Take a look.

Other Foods to Reconsider	
Food	The New Thinking
Vegetable oil (olive and canola)	Both are rich in monounsaturated fats, which is easy on cholesterol levels.
Shrimp	Though high in cholesterol, shrimp is low in fat and can be part of a healthful diet. Shrimp is a good source of protein, calcium, iron and vitamin D.
Margarine-type spreads	Some new margarines contain plant sterols that have been shown to help lower cholesterol by as much as 10 percent when part of a low-fat diet.

**Chocolate**—Chocolate and cocoa contain antioxidants called flavonoids (also found in soy, red wine and tea). Some studies suggest that foods high in antioxidants and flavonoids may slow blood clotting and plaque build-up inside artery walls—a benefit to heart health. The type of fat in chocolate, stearic acid, is considered somewhat healthful, too. It is converted to the same type of monounsaturated fat found in olive oil, which appears to have a somewhat neutral effect on artery-clogging LDL cholesterol levels and may raise plaque-removing HDL cholesterol levels.

The type of chocolate, however, is important. Varieties that contain higher percentages of cocoa (where the flavonoids are found) and lower percentages of sugar and saturated vegetable fats are best. Dark chocolate, in particular, tends to contain more cocoa and less saturated fat.

**Nuts**—Once considered a high-fat snack that adds on the pounds, nuts are now applauded for their nutrition. They contain protein, fiber, B vitamins, including folic acid, and several minerals. Nuts contain monounsaturated fat, which may lower LDL cholesterol and may raise HDL cholesterol. Nuts also contain plant sterols that help the body to absorb less cholesterol. Nuts provide antioxi-

dants such as vitamin E plus phytochemicals, which are good for heart health and may reduce the risk of some cancers.

**Eggs**—Eggs often have been eliminated from heart-healthy diets because of their cholesterol content. A number of clinical studies, however, have found that people with normal blood cholesterol levels (less than 200mg/dl) who ate one or even two eggs each day did not experience an increase in their cholesterol, nor an increased risk for heart attack or stroke. (Note: About 15 to 20 percent of the population is sensitive to the amount of cholesterol they eat. For these individuals, even a modest amount can affect blood cholesterol levels.) For most people, the amount of saturated fat they eat has a greater impact on their cholesterol level. Eggs are rich in protein, B vitamins, iron and other minerals that promote good health.

**A Great Start Toward Total Nutrition**—The qualifiers in all this good news are moderation and an overall healthful diet. In order to enjoy the taste and healthful ingredients of chocolate, nuts and eggs, a diet must be low in fat and filled with fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

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