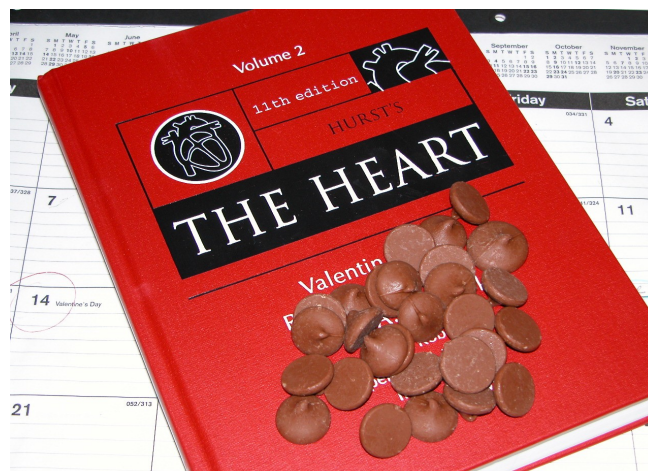


## ♥ Health Minute

How sweet it is...

Valentine's day is coming and that means one thing – CHOCOLATE. Believe it or not, some chocolate is actually *good* for your heart. Tufts University in Boston asked 20 volunteers with high blood pressure to eat 3.5 ounces of bittersweet chocolate every day for 15 days. At the end of the study, they found a 12 point decrease in systolic pressure and a 9 point decrease in diastolic blood pressure. This improvement is likely due to flavonoids in cocoa that appear to have benefits on blood vessel function. These flavonoids are highest in *bittersweet* chocolate – chocolate that has at least 50% cocoa.



### Chocolate Facts

- ♥ The word chocolate comes from “chocolatl” an Aztec Indian Drink made of cocoa beans
- ♥ Chocolate only grows 20 degrees north or south of the equator
- ♥ Cocoa butter is solid at room temperature and melts at just under body temperature
- ♥ It takes five years after planting for a cacao tree to produce fruit.



### Not all chocolate is alike

- ♥ Unsweetened – almost 100% cocoa. Used for baking.
- ♥ Bittersweet - 50 to 85% cocoa. Low in sugar, high in flavonoids.
- ♥ Semi-sweet – 40 – 62% cocoa
- ♥ Sweet dark – 35 – 45% cocoa.
- ♥ Milk – cream, milk, and sugar added.
- ♥ White – mostly cocoa butter with no cocoa, some countries will not allow it to be called chocolate