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The sweetest prescription? Rural doctors say chocolate can have its place

World Chocolate Day



If you've been looking for a medically acceptable excuse to enjoy a piece of chocolate, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) has some sweet news.

To mark **World Chocolate Day** on 7 July, RDAA President Professor Sarah Chalmers says that you *can* make chocolate part of your a healthy lifestyle, and there are even some good reasons to savour a little of the darker varieties.



"Sometimes it can feel like nothing that is enjoyable is also good for you, but with chocolate it can be – particularly when we're talking about dark chocolate enjoyed in moderation," Professor Chalmers said.

"Dark chocolate contains naturally occurring compounds (flavonoids) which have been linked to benefits for heart health, including helping to support healthy blood vessel function and blood pressure as part of an overall healthy diet.

"And you know what? Life can be stressful. Taking time to enjoy a small treat, catch up with friends over a coffee, or simply pause for a few minutes can be great for your mental well being, and the benefits of having enjoyable things in your life cannot be underestimated.

Professor Chalmers said World Chocolate Day was also a timely reminder that healthy living isn't about perfection.

"Good health isn't built on one meal, one workout or one piece of chocolate. It's the habits we build over time that make the biggest difference."

"So, if you're celebrating World Chocolate Day, or just adding some enjoyment to your 'everyday' with some of your favourite dark chocolate, enjoy it without the guilt.

"In fact, think about leaning in to that experience. Shop (or mail order) a quality chocolate that is special to you, and take the time to really enjoy, one small portion at a time.

"And if anyone asks, tell them a rural doctor said a balanced, health diet, complete with some chocolate, is the sweetest prescription of all."

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[Photo of Prof Sarah Chalmers](#)

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