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THE TRUTH ABOUT DARK CHOCOLATE

As you give and get chocolate for Valentine's Day (or jump on post-holiday chocolate sales), you'll probably hear that dark chocolate is healthy for you. Before you decide to incorporate dark chocolate into your daily diet, you should ask yourself what that means. Can dark chocolate really be "healthy"?

Studies on dark chocolate's supposed benefits focus on compounds found within cocoa, specifically flavanols, which are found in most fruits and vegetables (and cocoa!) and help lower blood pressure and reduce low-density lipoproteins, aka "bad" cholesterol.

By that notion, dark chocolate *does* have heart health benefits, but taking advantage of those benefits is not as simple as just eating dark chocolate. Each bar will include a percentage, which indicates the amount of cocoa. The higher the percentage, the better; 70%-80% is considered the sweet spot in terms of balancing health benefits and flavor, but as the percentage of cocoa increases, the more bitter the chocolate becomes.



However, the amount of flavanols found in a typical 1-ounce piece of 80% dark chocolate is very small. Alice H. Lichtenstein, a Gershoff professor of nutrition science and policy at Tufts University in Boston, says, "Dark chocolate has more flavanols than other types of chocolate; the data to suggest there is enough to have a health effect is thin at this point."

A 2017 study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association that focused on dark chocolate, cocoa, and raw almonds also concluded that the heart benefits were small. Dark chocolate appeared most effective when paired with other heart-healthy foods, such as almonds.

So what about other types of chocolate, like milk or semi-sweet? Once the cocoa content falls below 60%, the benefits disappear entirely. The flavanol levels are too low and the sugar and fat content too high, which negates any heart health benefits.

As with all good things, moderation is key. Eating too much dark chocolate has the reverse effect and can cause inflammation, and inflammation is the enemy of the heart.



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BE OUR VALENTINE?

WE MIGHT NEED MORE THAN A MONTH TO LOVE ON OUR PATIENTS!

I love Valentine's Day. It's a holiday all about showing love to the people in your life who matter, and my practice is all about "loving on" our patients, to show them they matter. We don't just want you to come in and walk right back out the door after your treatment. When someone matters to you, you get to know them. You stay in touch. You celebrate their successes, answer their questions, and make sure they're satisfied, even years later. So, while I'm here to show you the love year-round, I also want to take this opportunity to celebrate you, the patient. I want you to be my valentine this year!

When you come to me for your care, I fully understand how much trust you are putting in me. The work we do here is delicate, and while it is based on the best science, there is plenty of art involved as well. We are here to make you feel better, inside and out, and that begins with great, nurturing service.

I know what that kind of service looks like because I've been fortunate enough to receive it myself. As many of you know, I went to the doctor often as a kid. I made the best of it, a task made easier by the wonderful people at the practice. They made me feel better, from the smiling nurse who knew everybody and greeted me with a "Hello, Michael!" to the doctor himself, who had a wonderful, reassuring manner. Looking back, I see that I was blessed with wonderful health care professionals.

Now, of course, I'm blessed with wonderful patients like you, bringing positivity into our lives. It's the inverse of what I wrote about a few months ago, when I talked about staying positive in tough conditions and sharing that positivity with others. It is your attitude, your smiles, and the changes we make together that are all tremendously positive, and it makes me want to provide the best care possible.

My team shares this mission, not because I've told them they have to, but because I have the "right people on the bus," so to speak. Every one of them is a "people person" who understands where the "bus" is headed, which is loving our patients as much as we can. More than that, they all want to do this type of work, because that's the kind of people they are. I knew I needed loving, friendly people who were also very good at their jobs — and I was lucky enough to find them. Our team knows you are the No. 1 priority, and when I hear the accolades you give them, I know we are putting patients first.

So, although it *is* Valentine's Day this month, we try to act like it's Valentine's Day every month, or every week, for that matter. It's a great way to make sure we're doing right by you. Every touch, every follow-up, every email or phone call, or every office visit is conducted like that day is Valentine's Day, and you're our valentine.

I couldn't have asked for a better one.

-Dr. Mike

MASTER YOUR SKIN’S GLOW WITH HYDRATION

No matter what type of skin you have — dry, oily, or a combination — hydration is an important part of your skin care. But how well do you understand the science behind keeping your skin hydrated? Knowing a few key facts could change your routine and keep you glowing for a lifetime.

1. DRINK LOTS OF WATER.

Research shows that even mild dehydration can cause memory and mood issues in people of all ages, but it can also negatively affect your skin. Keeping your skin hydrated from within may seem like a boring life hack, but it’s true: Drinking water can make a huge difference in not only how you think and feel but also in how your skin maintains its glow.

2. DON’T TAKE LONG, HOT SHOWERS.

It may surprise you that standing in hot water dehydrates your skin, but over time, hot water strips away your skin’s barrier and causes a loss of moisture and necessary oils. Try using lukewarm water, or as cool as you can handle, to protect your skin.

3. EMBRACE YOUR HUMIDIFIER.

It’s not just handy for your sick days! Humidifiers can keep your glow on by maintaining the moisture in your skin. In the dry winter months, the air loses moisture, and so does your skin. Get a reliable humidifier, and you’ll never have to worry about it again!



4. RECOVER MOISTURE AT NIGHT.

During the day, your skin loses moisture. That’s why you need to take full advantage of your sleep and put on a heavy night mask, moisturizer, or Vaseline so your skin can heal overnight.

5. USE HYDRATING SKIN PRODUCTS.

It’s hard to navigate the world of skin care on your own, and not all hydrating products are going to work for your skin type. Always talk to a dermatologist if you’re struggling to pick out the perfect moisturizer for you.

Even if your skin has been dry for years, with some time and dedication to new hydration habits, you can have fuller, glowing skin. Whatever you do, don’t give up!

A CUPID CASE STUDY

HOW TO GET — OR SHED — HIS LOOK

Love is in the air this month, and that means Cupid can’t be too far behind. A popular figure in Greek and Roman myths, he set many a story in motion with his arrows. Today he remains a popular figure — talk about staying power — and as the picture of health and youth, he is a useful case study in attraction. There’s a lot to love about this little guy, but he’s not without flaws, either. Why not capture some of his youth for yourself this month?

Cupid is a testament to the eternal ideals of wide eyes, full cheeks, and rosy lips. Of course, not all of us are lucky to have his mystical pedigree, which means we may need a little help from modern medicine to beat him at his own game! Our practice has a wide array of treatments that can help fill out your face and leave even Cupid jealous. An eyelid lift might be in order to show off your sparkling gaze. If his cheeks have got you thinking about your youth, a more general facelift can give you that look you remember. And a new lip filler, Kysse (which

we’ve written about at length in this edition of the newsletter), is just the ticket for rosy lips like his.

As it turns out, back in ancient Greece, Cupid was portrayed as a slim young man — no baby fat involved! But we all change as the years pass, right? That said, while a chubby tummy and arms are okay for a cherub, it’s not a look most of us want. Fortunately, it’s not a look we’re stuck with! Our clinic’s tummy tuck is both art and science, revealing the toned stomach underneath any muffin-top. And upper-arm flab, so hard to lose even with diet and exercise, has absolutely met its match with our arm lift treatment.

Cupid’s stories are full of stolen love and borrowed glamour. Fortunately, those days are long in the past, which means you can steal his youthful look for yourself through the magic of medicine. Give us a call, and let our staff love on you this Valentine’s Day — no magic arrows required.



IN KYSS-ING SHAPE FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

NEW LIP FILLER KISSES THE COMPETITION GOODBYE

Our patients deserve the best, and right now the best is Kysse lip filler, plain and simple. Just in time for Valentine’s Day, this filler is a step above and beyond anything else out there. You’ll love the way your lips look with this treatment: plump, with a bit of pout, and eminently kissable.



Kysse was developed with an understanding of lips (and how we use them) in mind by the good people at Restylane. We use our lips a lot, whether we realize it or not. That presents a challenge in several ways. First, any filler must move with the lips naturally. Past fillers didn’t always do that in a pleasing manner, with a static mass of gel that wanted to stay put instead. The second challenge is that because of the amount of movement, fillers often broke down quickly. A “three-month” filler might have a lifespan that was much shorter in reality.

Kysse has broken those stereotypes completely. It’s a softer, almost spongy filler that molds to your tissue. That means it moves with your lips and doesn’t break down nearly as fast as other fillers. It also means that a Kysse injection is very quick, and recovery time is quite minimal. Kysse wants to work *with* your body, not against it.

And work it does: Lips will look plump, full, and rosy with Kysse. They’ll also appear more moisturized — a bonus. No more upper lip

disappearing when you smile or worrying about making the right expression in photos because Kysse has that covered. It’s a healthy, beautiful look any time of day. Add gloss or lipstick, and your lips will be in a league of their own.

The cherry on top? Longevity. Kysse today means Kysse for Christmas, too, since this filler lasts for a whole calendar year. That’s because Kysse works with your lips, so it will last, unlike other products. So, what are you waiting for? Get Kyssed this Valentine’s Day!

BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO

A HONEYMOON DISCOVERY RETURNS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

Is there anything more romantic than an Italian honeymoon? Perhaps, because this Valentine’s day we’re enjoying a bottle of Brunello Di Montalcino—a delicious wine my wife and I first discovered many years ago as newlyweds in Italy. Vinted from 100% Sangiovese grapes, it’s the product of an extended winemaking process in the Montalcino area of Tuscany. It’s a red wine that never fails to remind me of honeymooning with my new bride. This particular bottle was a Christmas gift from my ever-thoughtful neighbor, who is a good guy indeed.

Like love itself, Brunelo di Montalcino is not for the faint of heart. It pairs well with a Valentine’s-Day steak, hearty vegetables, or a strong pecorino cheese. Don’t hesitate to enjoy this one by itself, either, especially as you take in the evening with the person you love most.



INSPIRATION

