

Anti-aging chocolate

Look after your health in the most delicious way possible

by Jörn Wagenbach

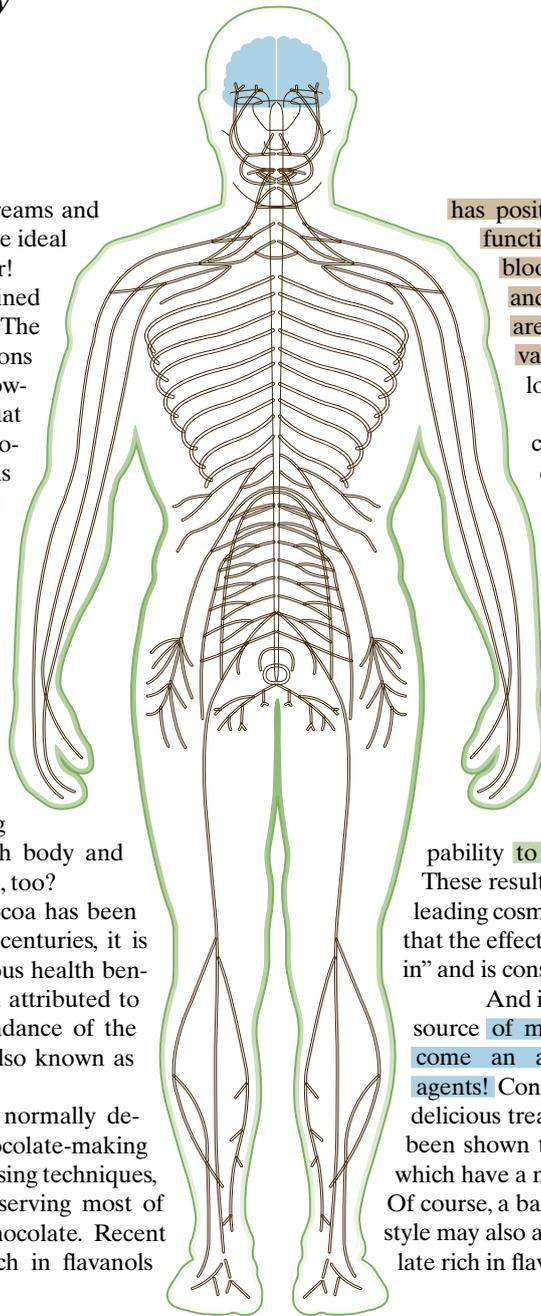
Forget about the pills and anti-aging creams and indulge in what scientists found to be the ideal way to stay healthy and happy ever after!

Never before has our planet contained such a large percentage of older people. The Population Division of the United Nations states that “The older population is growing at a considerably faster rate than that of the world’s total population. In absolute terms, the number of older persons has tripled over the last 50 years and will more than triple again over the next 50 years. In relative terms, the percentage of older persons is projected to more than double worldwide over the next half century.”

No wonder that international consumer surveys show that also chocolate lovers are increasingly seeking indulgence that additionally offers clinically proven functional health benefits, or, in other words: an anti-aging chocolate with positive effects on both body and mind. Does that sound appealing to you, too?

While the nutritional potency of cocoa has been exploited in traditional medicines for centuries, it is only relatively recently that the numerous health benefits of this remarkable fruit have been attributed to the large variety and unmatched abundance of the flavanols, a sub-class of polyphenols (also known as antioxidants), within the cocoa bean.

Most of these cocoa flavanols are normally destroyed during the conventional chocolate-making process. By creating more careful processing techniques, Barry Callebaut has succeeded in preserving most of the natural flavanols from bean to chocolate. Recent studies demonstrate that chocolate rich in flavanols



has positive effects on a whole range of bodily functions, including the maintenance of healthy blood pressure levels, more vein elasticity, and better blood flow. These improvements are generally associated with better cardiovascular health. What a delicious way to look after your well-being!

But there is more. Independent clinical studies have revealed that eating chocolate rich in flavanols can significantly help to protect your skin from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation. They demonstrate that regular consumption of specially produced chocolate with preserved high cocoa flavanol levels can more than double the resistance of the skin to UV light and additionally increase the hydration and elasticity of your skin. The authors of the studies state that the effects are most likely to be caused by the anti-inflammatory activity of the cocoa flavanols and their capability to increase blood circulation in the skin. These results are comparable with those achieved by leading cosmetics products. The difference, however, is that the effect after eating chocolate comes from “within” and is consequently observed over the whole body.

And it get’s even better. Cocoa is also a natural source of mood-lifting components which may become an alternative to existing anti-depressant agents! Consumers already know that chocolate is a delicious treat that keeps their spirits high. It has now been shown that there are also components in cocoa which have a mood-lifting effect. Of course, a balanced and varied diet and a healthy lifestyle may also add to the positive effects of eating chocolate rich in flavanols... •

Barry Callebaut has succeeded in creating a special process, called ACTICOA™, that combines the divine taste of cocoa and chocolate with its health-promoting properties by preserving up to 80% of the flavanol content of raw

cocoa. ACTICOA™ chocolate is one of the richest natural sources of cocoa flavanols. At present, around 30 products containing ACTICOA™ cocoa or chocolate are sold in more than 10 countries around the world.