**BETA CHOCKERS**

**Eating just one chocolate bar a day ‘can reduce risk of stroke by 23 per cent,’ says study**

By Nick McDermott, Health Editor

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COMMENTS

Research found munching between two and six chocolate bars each week gave the greatest protection

**MUNCHING on a chocolate bar is good for your heart, a study suggests.**

People who regularly enjoy a sweet treat cut their risk of atrial fibrillation, one of the biggest causes of strokes, by up to 23 per cent.

Chomping on two to six 30g portions, about the size of a Cadbury’s Flake, every week gives the greatest protection.

The benefit is less marked for those who indulge every day and goes down to ten per cent for those who have just a couple of bars a months.

The findings come from a study of 55,000 Danish people over more than 13 years.

Flavonoids, natural compounds found in cocoa, were found to boost blood vessel health.

Dark chocolate was likely to be better for our tickers than milk varieties, experts added.

US researcher Elizabeth Mostofsky said: “Even small amounts of cocoa consumption can have a positive health impact.”

Atrial fibrillation — faulty electrical activity in the heart — affects nearly two million Brits and raises the chances of stroke and heart failure.

Victoria Taylor, senior dietitian at the British Heart Foundation, said cocoa had been linked to a variety of health benefits.

But she added: “However, although this is a large study, it is only observational and so other factors could also be responsible for the effects seen. We need additional research.

“If you eat chocolate, keep your portions small and go for dark chocolate with the highest cocoa content.”