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My Sweet Valentine the portion perfection guide to enjoying chocolate



While chocolate is undeniably the gift of choice when it comes to showing your love on Valentines Day, it shouldn't give you licence to devour the whole box in one sitting, especially if you are watching your weight.

In fact, weight aside, enjoying only one or two really good quality chocolate is much more satisfying, especially if you totally give into the experience and savour every moment.

So on Valentines Day, you don't have to miss out completely – you can have your [chocolate] cake, and eat it too if you perfect your chocolate portions.

Sweet Sensations

“When buying chocolate for a special occasion, go for something small and divine like a mini box of Guylian Shells with a huge bunch of flowers,” says Amanda Clark, author of Portion Perfection – a visual weight control plan.

“Or two individually wrapped or gourmet individual chocolates with lingerie.”

Make the chocolate the trimming not the gift.

If you are given a box of chocolates remember that all calories are almost equal, so don't eat the whole box at once. One chocolate generally has the same calories as an apple, only the nutrients differ.

And there's nothing sexy about feeling sick from too much chocolate.

Try not to waste your time on poor quality chocolate as it will leave you feeling unsatisfied and reaching for more.

“Good quality, gourmet chocolate is one of life's pleasures and not meant to be rushed,” says Amanda. “Smell the chocolate – even the smell of chocolate makes a chocolate lover feel good. Don't chew your chocolate, just let it dissolve in your mouth. That way you will have had a true chocolate experience.”

One or two dark chocolates also has the added benefit of being good for your health. The antioxidants in dark chocolate help lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

And more on the health front, chocolate is low GI, except for white chocolate, which actually isn't really chocolate at all.

Eat your chocolate at room temperature. If the chocolate is too cold or partially melted you won't enjoy it as much.

Store your chocolate in a place that's not in your face. "Research shows that when chocolates are kept visible and within reach we eat more than when they are out of sight but within reach and we eat the least when they are out of sight and out of reach. Keep them in the freezer so you're not tempted to eat more than you took out to thaw," says Amanda.

Remember, Valentine's Day really is about love, but if you're lucky and cupid's chocolate arrow has hit you, enjoy your chocolate, one or two at a time.

About the Portion Perfection book, plate and bowl



Evidence suggests that the more food we put on our plate, the more we eat. Oversized packages, restaurant and take away meals and even our home cooking serve to sabotage even the most mindful eaters by making us eat more without significant awareness.

You can lose weight eating normal everyday foods, with the right thinking and the right portion size.

Portion Perfection – a visual weight control plan by dietitian Amanda Clark shows you exactly the right amount to eat if you want to lose or maintain weight. The book includes everyday and occasional foods (including the high sacrifice foods you don't want to live without) and spells out just how much to eat for everyone over the age of 5 years. It has hundreds of pictures showing popular Australian packaged foods, including almost every brand of yoghurt, cereal and muesli bar available in Australia, as well as common take-away foods.

There's also a Portion Perfection plate and bowl to make sure you serve up the right amount. All the Portion Perfection products are available at www.greatideas.net.au along with all the healthy cookbooks and resources recommended by Australian Dietitians.

The Portion Perfection book is available at all good book stores. RRP: \$34.95.

About the Author

Amanda Clark is an Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian who received one of the highest accolades in her profession when she won the Dietitians Association of Australia's President's Award for Innovation. Amanda has spent the past 15 years reviewing other nutrition authors' work for listing of the best on her online bookshop at www.greatideas.net.au



More information, images, content or interviews:

Jane Keighley
JaKe Public Relations
Phone: 07 5554 6034
Mobile: 0403504624
Email: jane@jakepublicrelations.com.au
Web: www.jakepublicrelations.com.au