Can chocolate lower your risk of stroke?

February 11 2010

Eating chocolate may lower your risk of having a stroke, according to an analysis of available research that will be released today and presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 62nd Annual Meeting in Toronto April 10 to April 17, 2010. Another study found that eating chocolate may lower the risk of death after suffering a stroke.

The analysis involved reviewing three studies on chocolate and stroke.

"More research is needed to determine whether chocolate truly lowers stroke risk, or whether healthier people are simply more likely to eat chocolate than others," said study author Sarah Sahib, BScCA, with McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Sahib worked alongside Gustavo Saposnik, MD, MSc, where the study was completed at St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto.

Chocolate is rich in antioxidants called flavonoids, which may have a protective effect against stroke, but more research is needed.

The first study found that 44,489 people who ate one serving of chocolate per week were 22 percent less likely to have a stroke than people who ate no chocolate. The second study found that 1,169 people who ate 50 grams of chocolate once a week were 46 percent less likely to die following a stroke than people who did not eat chocolate.

The researchers found only one additional relevant study in their search of all the available research. That study found no link between eating chocolate and risk of stroke or death.

Provided by American Academy of Neurology