

Rollagranola

Product of the Month: Absolutely Chocolate

My two boys (3 and 5) absolutely love Absolutely Chocolate, and it is the only chocolate cereal we have in the house!

STAR Ingredients:

Cacao Powder/ 100% chocolate

As if anyone needed to have a reason to love chocolate. Cacao (aka chocolate) is bountiful of health properties, it is an antioxidant which means that it helps the body neutralize free radicals – those particles in your body that cause damage to tissue and speed up the ageing process!

Cacao also helps regulate the immune response and reduce obesity related inflammationⁱ. Those interested in gut health will be grateful to know that cacao helps increase beneficial gut microbes such as Lactobacilli at the same time as decreasing non-beneficial bacteria such as Clostridia. In fact one study has shown that cacao or chocolate modifies the gut microbiota in the same way that pre and probiotics doⁱⁱ – and all in an incredibly palatably pleasing way!

Ginger

Ginger is a member of a plant family that includes cardamom and turmeric. Known for relieving common health problems such as pain, nausea and vomiting! It has been used for thousands of years for the treatment of colds, nausea, arthritis, migraines and hypertensionⁱⁱⁱ. This power herb also provides anti-oxidative (ageing) and anti-inflammatory effects, it's starting to sound like this product should be in every athlete's cupboard!

Oats

Many I'm sure are already aware of the health promoting properties of this grain – they are a good source of carbohydrates and protein with a good amino acid balance, they also contain abundant vitamins and phytochemicals^{iv}. More specifically oats are loaded with the following nutrients:

- Manganese: important for skin integrity, bone production, blood sugar control and protection against free radical damage (ageing!)
- Molybdenum: important antioxidant mineral
- Phosphorus: needed for basic cell function, bone strength and maintaining energy supplies
- Copper: needed for bone and tissue integrity, energy production and cholesterol balance
- Biotin: plays an important role in skin health and blood sugar control
- Vitamin B1: promotes energy production and supports the nervous system
- Magnesium: enables energy production, maintains nervous system balance and enhances the control of inflammation and blood sugar levels.
- Chromium: needed for blood sugar control

- zinc - important for immunity, reproduction and skin health and repair.

As you can see oats have a number of health benefits from the array of nutrients they contain, specifically balancing blood sugar levels, maintaining skin and bone integrity and promoting energy production.

Hazelnuts

Hazelnuts are high in fibre, vitamin E, protein and healthy fats making them a great addition to the already amazing line of ingredients in Absolutely Chocolate! The combination of high fibre, healthy fat and protein mean that hazelnuts are a great addition to your diet if you are looking to support your heart health, reduce inflammation, improve insulin sensitivity (aka Type 2 diabetes!), lower cholesterol and protect your cells against free radical damage (ageing!). More recently hazelnuts have been found to promote the growth of beneficial bacteria within the gut^v, giving them gut health promoting properties too!

Overall

Who would have thought it that you can have your chocolate and eat it to help promote your health – now you can in this amazing product? Absolutely chocolate has gut health promoting properties too due to its high fibre (oats, nuts) and high polyphenol (cacao, hazelnuts, oats) content. So if you're looking to support your immune system, get your blood sugar levels under control, reduce your high cholesterol and promote healthy ageing add this to your breakfast collection!

ⁱ Gu Y., Yu S., Lambert J.D. Dietary cocoa ameliorates obesity-related inflammation in high fat-fed mice. *Eur. J. Nutr.* 2013 doi: 10.1007/s00394-013-0510-1.

ⁱⁱ Hayek N. Chocolate, gut microbiota, and human health. *Front. Pharmacol.* 2013;4 doi: 10.3389/fphar.2013.00011

ⁱⁱⁱ Bode AM, Dong Z. The Amazing and Mighty Ginger. In: Benzie IFF, Wachtel-Galor S, editors. *Herbal Medicine: Biomolecular and Clinical Aspects*. 2nd edition. Boca Raton (FL): CRC Press/Taylor & Francis; 2011. Chapter 7. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK92775/>

^{iv} WHfoods (no date) *Oats*. Available at: <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=54> (Accessed: 12 January 2021).

^v Gargari, G. *et al.* (2018) 'Evidence of dysbiosis in the intestinal microbial ecosystem of children and adolescents with primary hyperlipidemia and the potential role of regular hazelnut intake', *FEMS Microbiology Ecology*, 94(5). doi: 10.1093/femsec/fiy045.