Chocolate and Cocoa: Try These Tasty Treats for Tresses and Skin

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Good news for chocolate lovers: Becoming a smart consumer of cocoa-related products may benefit both your hair and skin health and add vibrancy to your tresses. NaturallyCurly.com reveals how several theobroma cacao tree products, such as chocolate and cocoa butter, can be incorporated into your hair care and beauty regimens.

Cocoa butter. Not only does cocoa butter—made from processed cocoa beans—work wonders for dry skin and calloused feet or hands, but it's also excellent as a hot oil treatment to condition hair. In addition, you can blend it into healing balms that soothe burns, and its oil is also a key ingredient in many herbal cosmetics. Some people enjoy the distinct scent of cocoa butter, but the same products are also available in scentless forms. Melt a dab of cocoa butter into your bath water to help your skin absorb its benefits. What's more, black cocoa butter, which is the color of dark espresso rather than the more common cream color, is a relatively new product on the hair and skin care scene. This kind of cocoa butter is said to be more easily absorbed into the skin and can also be used for a hot oil treatment to condition hair.

Dark chocolate. You're probably familiar with this bittersweet treat, but what you may not know is that this cocoa product contains compounds called flavonoids. Flavonoids are a highly effective type of antioxidant that may help fight cancer. (Antioxidants are dietary substances that can prevent damage to the body's cells or repair damage that's been done.) Dark chocolate is considered to be one of the foods with the highest concentration of flavonoids.

But choosing which cocoa products to buy can be overwhelming. What's more, cocoa plantations have also been linked to child labor and slavery in Africa and Central America, where the theobroma cacao tree grows. That's why it's better to pick fair-trade cocoa products. The companies making these products are screened for good work conditions.

If you're interested in cocoa-containing hair products, NaturallyCurly.com provides a list.

Oh, there's one other thing about cocoa butter you should know. Although it may be great for your skin, it doesn't prevent stretch marks. That's one cocoa-related myth that's been busted. Click here to read more.

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