

Don't worry about gray on old chocolate

I rarely use the unsweetened chocolate in my cupboard, and now I find that it's got this gray stuff on the surface. Is it still OK to use?

Please, don't even think about throwing away perfectly good

chocolate! The gray color is purely superficial, it's caused by storing chocolate in too-warm or too-humid conditions. The color will disappear when you heat the chocolate to melt it.

All types of chocolate should be stored in a cool, dry place. If the temperature in your cupboard is going to get much warmer than 78 degrees, you might want to refrigerate chocolate for storage.

Before doing so, though, wrap it tightly in foil and seal it in a plastic freezer storage bag to prevent the chocolate from absorbing odors from other foods.

Unsweetened chocolate is the purest form of chocolate. It's about 50 percent cocoa butter, which gives it its smooth texture. Milk chocolate, on the other hand, is only about 10 percent pure

chocolate, with sugar, milk solids and extra cocoa butter added. Other types of chocolate include sweet chocolate, which is about 15 percent pure chocolate, and semisweet chocolate, which is

about 35 percent pure chocolate. White chocolate is made with sugar, cocoa butter, dry milk solids and flavorings.

If a recipe calls for unsweetened chocolate and you don't have any on hand, you can substitute 3 tablespoons cocoa powder plus 1 tablespoon shortening or cooking oil for each 1-ounce square the recipe calls for. To make semisweet chocolate from unsweetened chocolate, add one tablespoon of sugar for each ounce of chocolate.

No matter what kind of

chocolate you like, you can count on about 115 calories per ounce. Most types of chocolate also contain 9 or 10 grams of fat, although unsweetened chocolate contains 15 grams of fat per ounce. An ounce of cocoa contains about 70 calories and 5 grams of fat.

Chow Line is a service of The Ohio State University. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu

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