

Participant Information Sheet

Understanding the effects of chocolate consumption on mood

My name is Victoria Bourne and I am a member of staff in the Psychology Department, Royal Holloway, University of London. I am carrying out a study looking at how eating chocolate might affect mood, which is being supervised by Professor Cadbury.

Your participation in the study is important because relatively little is known at the moment about how different food type affect moods, and in particular whether eating chocolate might influence mood. If you agree to take part in this study I will ask you to eat a specific amount of chocolate, and then to complete a short questionnaire with some simple questions about your emotions and how you are feeling. Participating in this study will take around 30 minutes and it will take place in the Chocolate Lab.

There are no known risks to you from participating in this study, but if you have any food allergies or intolerances, please let the research know before the study commences as you may not be able to participate in this study. No one other than me [and my supervisor] will be able to see the data that you provide, and you will be identified by a unique participant identification code. You do not have to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. If you choose to withdraw during this study, please let the researcher know. You do not have to give any explanation, and without any cost to you. You will be given £5.00 for participating in this study. Ethical approval was granted for this study by the Departmental Ethics Committee.

If you would like to speak to me about this study, then please contact me on [phone number], or email me at [email address]. Alternatively, you could contact my supervisor on [phone number], or you could email them at [email address].

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Consent Form

Understanding the effects of chocolate consumption on mood

You have been asked to participate in a study about chocolate consumption and mood, which is being carried out by Victoria Bourne. Have you (please tick yes or no):

Read the information sheet giving information about the study, including an explanation of its aims and what you will be asked to do?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Had an opportunity to ask questions about the study?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you asked questions, did you receive satisfactory answers?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason? (and without it affecting your care/ education if applicable)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you agree to participate in this study?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

NB: This consent form will be stored separately from the anonymous data you provide.

Commented [VB1]: Think carefully about your title. It needs to be accurate, but also should avoid biasing participant's performance (threat to internal validity).

Commented [VB2]: Clearly identify yourself, your role and institution.

Commented [VB3]: Give a brief explanation of the aims of your study in everyday and easy to understand terms.

Commented [VB4]: If you have a research supervisor, name them on the form.

Commented [VB5]: Explain, in simple terms, why this piece of research is important for understanding psychology.

Commented [VB6]: Explain clearly what the participant will be expected to do.

Commented [VB7]: State how long it will take and where it will happen.

Commented [VB8]: Either state that there are no known risks, or identify possible risks and if they mean participation is not possible.

Commented [VB9]: Confirm anonymity and confidentiality.

Commented [VB10]: Be clear that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time.

Commented [VB11]: If there is any kind of reimbursement, course credit, entry into a raffle, include it on the consent form.

Commented [VB12]: State that you have ethical approval, and who gave it.

Commented [VB13]: Give possible methods of contact for yourself, and your supervisor if you have one.

Commented [VB14]: Remember that the participant should be able to keep the information sheet, and you keep the consent form, so if they are on the same page, they should be separable.

Commented [VB15]: Make sure the title is the same throughout the ethics paperwork.

Commented [VB16]: Confirm that they have received information about the study.

Commented [VB17]: Confirm that they had the opportunity to ask questions (and received answers if they did).

Commented [VB18]: Confirm that they understand they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Commented [VB19]: Confirm that they agree to participate in the study.

Commented [VB20]: Participant should give their name, sign and give the date.

Debriefing information sheet

Understanding the effects of chocolate consumption on mood

Thank you for taking part in this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine how consuming chocolate might influence mood. In the study there were two different groups of participants. One half of the participants were white chocolate to eat, whereas the other half were given a bar of milk chocolate to eat. The white chocolate is a control condition as it does not actually contain any cocoa solids, and therefore is not chocolate. We then asked all of our participants to complete a mood questionnaire that can be used to create a "happiness" score for each person. We can then compare happiness scores for participants who ate white or milk chocolate to see if there is a difference in happiness between the two groups. It is predicted that the participants who ate the milk chocolate will be happier than those who ate white chocolate.

Taking part in this study posed no risks to you, unless you have any food allergies or intolerances from consuming chocolate. If you do experience any negative side effects from eating the chocolate, please contact your GP for further advice.

The data that you provided for this study will be kept anonymous and confidential at all times.

If you would like to speak to me about this study, then please contact me on [phone number], or email me at [email address]. Alternatively, you could contact my supervisor on [phone number], or you could email them at [email address].

Again, thank you for participating in this piece for research.

Commented [VB21]: Make sure the title is the same throughout the ethics paperwork.

Commented [VB22]: Give a more detailed explanation of the study, but make sure that it is explained in simple and easily understandable terms. Some terms may need to be defined if they are not often used outside of psychological literature.

Commented [VB23]: Give your predicted findings.

Commented [VB24]: If there is any potential risk to the participant, very clearly explain the risk and how they can seek help, if it is needed.

Commented [VB25]: Give possible methods of contact for yourself, and your supervisor if you have one.

Commented [VB26]: Thank them for giving up their time to help you!

Additional information sometimes requested in ethics applications

When submitting an ethics application, you might be asked to provide more information about your study than just the study information sheet, consent form and debriefing. Below are some examples of the kinds of questions you could be asked, and possible responses to them.

What is the purpose/rational/need for this piece of research?

It is often claimed that eating chocolate can alter an individual's mood, and in particular that it might improve mood. However, there is little empirical research to support the anecdotal suggestion. This study will experimentally manipulate the type of chocolate that has been consumed: milk chocolate (containing cocoa solids) or white chocolate (no cocoa solids, the control condition) or not. We will then measure levels of happiness. It is predicted that participants who have eaten milk chocolate will be significantly happier than those who have eaten white chocolate (control condition).

Describe the methods to be used in this piece of research

There will be two independent conditions: white chocolate or milk chocolate eaten. Participants will be randomly allocated to a condition, will be asked to eat 50g of either white or milk chocolate. After a 30 minute delay, all participants will be asked to complete a mood questionnaire to measure "happiness".

The mood questionnaire will be an adapted version of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). The original scale contained 20 items, ten for positive affect and ten for negative affect. Only the positive affect items were used in the study. Each item is a word that describes a positive emotional state (e.g., proud, excited, inspired). In the original scale participants had to rate whether each item on whether it describes how they feel in the present moment on a scale of 1 (very slightly or not at all) through to 5 (extremely). For this study, the response has been adapted to a yes/no response. This will give a happiness score out of ten, where higher scores reflect a more positive mood, or feeling happier.

Participants: How will you recruit participants? How many will be recruited? Is there any inclusion/exclusion criteria? Will they be rewarded for their participation?

One hundred participants, fifty per condition, will be recruited by advertising around campus (e.g., posters, leaflet, notices on website). The only exclusion criterion is an allergy to any of the ingredients in chocolate. This is mentioned within the consent form, and if any participants report an allergy or food intolerance, they will not be included in the study. All participants will be paid £5.00 for their involvement in the study.

Plans for gaining consent and debriefing participants

Before taking part in the study, all participants will be asked to read the informed consent sheet (see attached) and will be given the opportunity to ask any questions that they might have. After participation in the study the researcher will verbally explain the purposes of the study to each participant and the participants will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the study. They will also be given a debriefing sheet (see attached) to take away with them that also explains the study and gives follow up contact details of the researchers.

Are any ethical guidelines potentially violated in this study? If yes, how will you deal with them?

There is very little potential for violation of ethical considerations within this research project. One possibility is that a participant may have an allergy or intolerance to the chocolate we ask them to consume. To avoid this, we ask about food allergies and intolerances within the consent form. If any participant reports an allergy or intolerance they will not be recruited to the study. There is also information on the debriefing form advising participants to contact their GP if they have any negative side effects from eating the chocolate.