

**I**n 2013 Dr John Walshe, the President of WDSG-UK, who has devoted his professional life to Wilson's disease and the treatment of his 320+ patients, was asked about diet for WD Patients and this was his response:

## Is it Important for Wilson's Patients to avoid Foods with Copper?

**All things in moderation!** It is clearly unwise to eat a lot of food with very high copper content, such as **liver, shellfish, cocoa products, nuts and seeds**. With **chocolate** it is the **cocoa bean** that contains the copper. The higher the **cocoa** content of the chocolate (**up to 99%**), the greater the amount of copper. White chocolate is probably safer for those who can't avoid it altogether.



## Do Long Established Patients need to be as Careful?

If you are **newly** diagnosed it is wise to observe and avoid the foods with **high/very high copper** content wherever possible. Once your treatment is **well established**, you can be more relaxed about what you eat, but try to avoid eating any of the **high/very high copper** foods **in excess**.



## Should I be trying to Avoid Copper in the Diet altogether?

Remember that **copper** is a trace element **essential for life** and it is neither possible nor desirable to live on a copper free diet. Long term de-coppering can, but does not always, result in the skin losing its elasticity, because it removes the copper from the enzyme which forms the cross linkages in collagen and elastin.



## Can Copper be absorbed through the Skin?

I know of no evidence to that effect. There certainly are no reports of copper miners suffering from copper poisoning.

## So Why do People wear copper bracelets to relieve rheumatism?

Why did the Ancient Greeks sacrifice goats to Aesculapian?



## Is it OK to drink alcohol when you have Wilson's Disease?

**Alcohol damages the liver** so it is very unwise to add further insult to that caused by copper. The combination of **alcohol** and **copper** on the liver is **DANGEROUS**.



### Summary

- **All things in moderation, and try to avoid eating high copper foods in excess**
- **Copper is essential for life. It is neither possible nor desirable to live on a copper free diet**
- **The combination of alcohol and copper on the liver is DANGEROUS.**