



# Wellness News Network™

Your Source for Health & Wellness Information

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## Tea and Health: The Good News Continues

Presented by:

“Drinking a daily cup of tea will surely starve the apothecary,” according to a Chinese proverb. Well, tea may not drive your pharmacist out of business, but this Chinese saying does have some merit when it comes to tea promoting better health.

Although we have covered the benefits of tea in a previous edition of the Wellness Express, new research has emerged that supports the therapeutic role of tea in a number of health conditions. In this update, we will look at a way to boost the effectiveness of tea for your health.

### Caffeine – An Antioxidant?

One question both the general public and scientists ask is “What role does caffeine play, if any, in the health benefits of tea?” There have been a number of studies on this topic, with scientific reports often showing contradictory results.

Last year, the *Journal of Physical Chemistry B* investigated caffeine as a source of antioxidants – molecules that protect your body from free radical cell damage.

After reviewing animal and laboratory experiments, the clinic investigators believe caffeine is likely to deliver antioxidant protection against some types of free radicals.<sup>1</sup>

### Colon Cancer & Tea

Catechins are health promoting substances found in tea, and recent research has focused on how they might help to fight colon cancer. Ohio State University and Purdue University conducted a study where health researchers used extracts from green and black tea with high amounts of the most active type of catechins known as EGCG/EGC to treat colon cancer cells. The results showed a significant reduction in colon cancer activity.<sup>2</sup>

The researchers noted that, as well as possibly leading to better cancer treatments, the study may help us develop food products that promote anticancer activity in our bodies.



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### QUESTION:

**Catechins are a type of ...?**

- A) Antioxidant
- B) Free radical
- C) Bile

### ANSWER:

A) Antioxidant – plentiful in tea

### TRUE OR FALSE:

**Green tea may slow weight gain**

### ANSWER:

True

### QUESTION:

**Adding one of the following boosts green tea’s health properties**

- A) Citrus juice
- B) Cream
- C) Honey

### ANSWER:

A) Citrus juice

## Weight Loss

Green tea could prove valuable for weight loss. Researchers at Penn State University conducted a study on feeding obese rodents with a high fat diet combined with an extract made from green tea catechins. Scientists discovered the mice that received the extract gained weight 45 percent more slowly compared to the control group mice.

Although a person would need to drink 10 cups of green tea daily to equal this percentage, the scientists commented that even one or two cups of green tea each day can help in reducing weight.<sup>3</sup>

## Superbug Killer?

A growing problem in the health community is the emergence of superbugs - bacteria resistant to antibiotics. These dangerous types of bacteria can spread easily and can live on many surfaces in hospitals, schools, homes and offices, but at a meeting of the Society of General Microbiology, Egyptian medical researchers reported they tested green tea (combined with antibiotics) against 28 disease causing micro-organisms. They noted that in all cases green tea boosted the anti-bacterial power of the medications. In one case, it improved bacterial eradication by 99 percent!<sup>4</sup>

## How to Boost the Power of Green Tea

Another interesting discovery health researchers made is that adding citrus juice to green tea may improve catechin absorption in the body.

In non-acidic environments catechins become unstable, but when researchers added citrus juice, such as lemon, into the tea, 80 percent of the catechins remained after the digestion process - a 60 percent increase compared to green tea without citrus juice.<sup>2</sup>

## Herbal Teas Deliver Good Health Too

Usually containing a mixture of herbs, flowers, roots and similar ingredients, herbal teas are more accurately called *tisanes or herbal infusions* because they do not actually contain leaves from the tea plant. However, several studies have uncovered health advantages in some tisanes. Yerba mate is a popular South American tea-like beverage that is now available in many parts of the world. Researchers at the University of Illinois investigated the caffeine derivatives in yerba mate and discovered they can kill colon cancer cells, most likely because the derivatives destroy the DNA of the dangerous cells and prevent them from reproducing.<sup>5</sup>

Another study linked yerba mate to boosting good (HDL) cholesterol and lowering bad (LDL) cholesterol.<sup>6</sup> However, you would need to use four or five teabags for a single serving to obtain this cholesterol lowering effect.

Other research shows chamomile tea has antimicrobial properties and hibiscus tea has a moderate effect on lowering blood pressure.<sup>7</sup>



## Quote to Inspire

*"We can't predict the future. We can't change the past. All we have is the present moment."*

*William T. Forte*

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