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Tea - Sip Your Way to Wellness

Presented by: **Total Health Systems**

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In the Chinese province of Yunnan, a tree still grows that first sprouted 3,200 years ago. And the leaves of this species of tree are used to create the second most popular beverage in the world: tea. (Only water is consumed more.)

Tea was widely touted for its medicinal properties almost since it was first cultivated.

The best known teas are green, black, white and oolong. Tea comes from the genus of *Camellia* - a group of plants that prefer to grow in the hot and moist climates of sub-tropical and tropical areas. The harvesting and processing of the tea leaves determine how a tea is classified by type. White tea and green tea leaves are steamed to stop oxidation. But they don't undergo any fermenting or processing like black and oolong tea.

As Good as Veggies?

Tea contains antioxidants - powerful molecules that can defend your body against attack from disease. In fact, black tea and green tea have as much as ten times the amount of antioxidants than fruit and vegetables.

Although large-scale research needs to be conducted, most types of tea show benefits for health – from reducing cholesterol to preventing cancer. A Swedish study that followed the dietary habits of 60,000 women (ages 40 to 76) over 15 years revealed those who drank two cups of tea daily cut their risk of ovarian cancer by 46%.¹

In addition, green tea shows exciting promise for treating breast cancer. This tea contains the potent antioxidant EGCG. In a breast cancer study using female mice injected with breast cancer cells, research uncovered the mice given EGCG had a slower progression of cancer cell growth compared to the mice only given drinking water. Tumor size was trimmed 68% in the EGCG group. Researchers speculate this green tea antioxidant may inhibit blood supply to the tumors and prevent cancer cells from spreading.² Green tea may also help prevent bladder, lung, stomach and colon cancer.

In the areas of brain health, this powerful tea may reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.



TRUE OR FALSE:

All tea leaves must be fermented before processing

ANSWER:

False. White tea and green tea are not fermented

QUESTION:

Where was tea first cultivated?

- A) China
- B) India
- C) Brazil

ANSWER:

A) China

TRUE OR FALSE:

Removing the caffeine decreases tea's antioxidants

ANSWER:

False.

Presented by: 43740 Garfield Road, Clinton Township (586) 228-0270
28098 23 Mile Road, Chesterfield (586) 949-0123
57911 Van Dyke Road, Washington (586) 781-0800

As well as fighting and preventing serious diseases of the body's organs, green tea benefits the musculoskeletal system. Research has shown that it may help soothe joint inflammation and reduce cartilage degeneration. In one study on green tea and arthritis, the researchers concluded, "Our studies suggest that a polyphenolic fraction from green tea that is rich in antioxidants may be useful in the prevention of onset and severity of arthritis."³

Although green tea has gotten most of the research spotlight, other teas are revealing their health potential.

Black tea demonstrates hope for treating type 2 diabetes. A study published by the *Journal of Food Science* found that specific polysaccharides, a type of carbohydrate, found in black tea might be especially effective at reducing blood sugar - much more than any other type of tea.⁴ Black tea may also help prevent stroke, while Oolong tea shows promise at slashing LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Does Caffeine Matter?

The one drawback of tea is caffeine. An 8-ounce cup of tea may contain 30 mg to 90 mg of this stimulant. While they dislike the side effects of caffeine, many people continue to consume tea because of the health benefits. The good news is you can still get the same antioxidant levels by drinking decaffeinated tea. A noted tea researcher says to date there's no evidence that tea's antioxidant flavonoids are affected by the removal of caffeine. So have another cup!

What About Herbal Teas?

Another option for those who've wanted to avoid caffeinated beverages has been to drink herbal tea. Usually containing a mixture of herbs, flowers, roots and similar ingredients, herbal teas are actually tisanes. This is because most herbal teas do not actually contain tea. While they may contain healthful properties, most herbal teas are not as high in antioxidants as genuine tea.



Brewing for the Best Benefits

The jury is still out on how much tea you need to drink daily to achieve the maximum health advantages. Some studies, like the Swedish cancer study, show positive results with just two cups a day. But other research suggests you may need to consume as much as a dozen cups of tea daily. The type of tea you drink may also influence how much of it you need to consume.

However, health experts do know you should brew tea for two to five minutes to ensure you get a good helping of antioxidants. You may want to steep fermented teas, like black and oolong, for five minutes, as these teas take longer to release their antioxidant compounds. Adding milk or cream to your tea may dampen its health benefits, so drink it clear

Quote to Inspire

"You are younger today than you ever will be again. Make use of it for the sake of tomorrow."

- Anonymous

References and Sources:

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- 4) Physicochemical Properties and Antioxidant Capacity of 3 Polysaccharides from Green Tea, Oolong Tea, and Black Tea - *Journal of Food Science, Volume 74 Issue 6, Pages C469 - C474.*

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