



# Wellness News Network™

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## Tea Time: Tea Types and Their Health Benefits

Presented by: Total Health Systems

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### Introduction

After water, tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world and its health effects can be wide-ranging. Tea, which is prepared by pouring hot water over the cured leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant, contains a class of natural chemicals called polyphenols. A 2002 study published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* states that tea polyphenols may help disrupt the development of several chronic diseases, including cancer and cardiovascular disease.<sup>1</sup> Improved weight control, reduced blood pressure and heightened mental alertness are other possible health benefits of tea. Talk with your chiropractor about what tea may be most appropriate in addressing your health concerns.

### Green Tea

Green tea is made from the unoxidized leaves of *Camellia sinensis* and contains the greatest concentration of antioxidant polyphenols. This tea, which has been cultivated for centuries in India and China, is known for its broad flavor palette, which ranges from sweet and nutty to grassy and vegetal. Traditional uses of green tea, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center, include improving heart health,

regulating blood glucose levels, improving cognitive processes and healing wounds.<sup>2</sup> A 2008 review article in the *Journal of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine* reports that green tea can help combat cancer, heart disease, and liver disease. This article also notes that green tea may help enhance exercise and weight loss and help treat diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, skin disorders, hair loss and iron overload.<sup>3</sup>



### Black Tea

Black tea is more oxidized than other tea types, including green, white and oolong teas, which helps give it a strong flavor. Because black tea retains its flavor longer than many other teas, it has historically been used as an article of trade and even as a type

### QUESTION:

What is the name of the health-affecting natural chemical found in tea?

- A) polycythemia
- B) polyesters
- C) polyphenols
- D) polygons

### ANSWER:

C) polyphenols

### TRUE OR FALSE:

Tea in general has been found to promote heart and artery health

### ANSWER:

True

### QUESTION:

Which tea has the least oxidization?

- A) Oolong
- B) White
- C) Black
- D) Green

### ANSWER:

B) White

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## Black Tea

Black tea is more oxidized than other tea types, including green, white and oolong teas, which helps give it a strong flavor. Because black tea retains its flavor longer than many other teas, it has historically been used as an article of trade and even as a type of currency in some regions at certain points in time. Black tea is the most commonly consumed tea in the United States, United Kingdom and Europe, notes the National Cancer Institute.<sup>4</sup> Black tea has numerous health benefits, including the ability to reverse endothelial dysfunction (i.e., problems with the inner lining of a blood vessel) in people with coronary artery disease, according to a 2001 study published in the journal *Circulation*.<sup>5</sup> Black tea may also be beneficial in preventing cancer. According to a 2006 study published in the journal *Anti-Cancer Agents in Medicinal Chemistry*, black tea polyphenols help regulate cancer cell growth, survival, and spread.<sup>6</sup>

## White Tea

White tea is a lightly oxidized tea that originated in Fujian, China. Many varieties of white tea exist today and this tea is now cultivated throughout China and South Asia (including India



and Sri Lanka). White tea is often best described as smooth, earthy, and very sweet. The light oxidation of this tea means that it is high in antioxidants. White tea has historically been used for promoting relaxation and general well-being. Other more specific health benefits associated with white tea include improved cardiovascular function, antibacterial and antiviral action. A 2009 study published in the journal *Experimental Dermatology* even states that the topical application of white tea extracts may offer protection against the detrimental effects of UV light, including oxidative damages to DNA.<sup>7</sup>

## Oolong Tea

Oolong, a traditional Chinese tea, is a semi-oxidized tea known for its sweet, milky flavor and floral aroma. Oolong teas possess a smoother flavor than some other teas and may be gentler on the stomach. Some of the most well-known oolongs are grown and harvested in Fujian, China as well as the mountains of Taiwan. Oolong teas are used for a wide variety of health purposes, including the prevention of cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis and tooth decay. Oolong teas, which are believed to boost immunity, may also be helpful in treating obesity, diabetes, atherosclerosis and certain skin conditions. According to a 2003 study published in the journal *Diabetes Care*, oolong tea may help lower plasma glucose levels in type 2 diabetics and may be an effective supplement to oral hypoglycemic agents in treating type 2 diabetes.<sup>8</sup>

## Quote to Inspire

*“A woman is like a tea bag - you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.”*

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

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