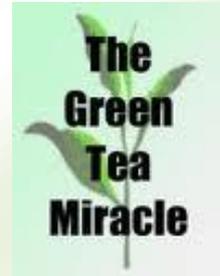


The Miracle of Green Tea

**"Better to be deprived of food for three days, than tea for one."
(Ancient Chinese Proverb)**

Is any other food or drink reported to have as many health benefits as green tea? The Chinese have known about the medicinal benefits of green tea since ancient times, using it to treat everything from headaches to depression. In her book *Green Tea: The Natural Secret for a Healthier Life*, Nadine Taylor states that green tea has been used as a medicine in China for at least 4,000 years.



Today, scientific research in both Asia and the west is providing hard evidence for the health benefits long associated with drinking green tea. For example, in 1994 the Journal of the National Cancer Institute published the results of an epidemiological study indicating that drinking green tea reduced the risk of esophageal cancer in Chinese men and women by nearly sixty percent. University of Purdue researchers recently concluded that a compound in green tea inhibits the growth of cancer cells. There is also research indicating that drinking green tea lowers total cholesterol levels, as well as improving the ratio of good (HDL) cholesterol to bad (LDL) cholesterol.

To sum up,
just a few



here are
medical

conditions in which drinking green tea is reputed to be helpful:

- cancer
- rheumatoid arthritis
- high cholesterol levels
- cardiovascular disease
- infection
- impaired immune function



What makes green tea so special?

The secret of green tea lies in the fact it is rich in catechin polyphenols, particularly epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG). EGCG is a powerful anti-oxidant: besides inhibiting the growth of cancer cells, it kills cancer cells without harming healthy tissue. It has also been effective in lowering LDL cholesterol levels, and inhibiting the abnormal formation of blood clots. The latter takes on added importance when you consider that thrombosis (the formation of abnormal blood clots) is the leading cause of heart attacks and stroke.

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Links are being made between the effects of drinking green tea and the "French Paradox." For years, researchers were puzzled by the fact that, despite consuming a diet rich in fat, the French have a lower incidence of heart disease than Americans. The answer was found to lie in red wine, which contains resveratrol, a polyphenol that limits the negative effects of smoking and a fatty diet. In a 1997 study, researchers from the University of Kansas determined that EGCG is twice as powerful as resveratrol, which may explain why the rate of heart disease among Japanese men is quite low, even though approximately seventy-five percent are smokers.



Why don't other Chinese teas have similar health-giving properties? Green, oolong, and black teas all come from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant. What sets green tea apart is the way it is processed. Green tea leaves are steamed, which prevents the EGCG compound from being oxidized. By contrast, black and oolong tea leaves are made from fermented leaves, which results in the EGCG being converted into other compounds that are not nearly as effective in preventing and fighting various diseases.

Other Benefits

New evidence is emerging that green tea can even help dieters. In November, 1999, the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* published the results of a study at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. Researchers found that men who were given a combination of caffeine and green tea extract burned more calories than those given only caffeine or a placebo.



Green tea can even help prevent tooth decay! Just as its bacteria-destroying abilities can help prevent food poisoning, it can also kill the bacteria that causes dental plaque. Meanwhile, skin preparations containing green tea - from deodorants to creams - are starting to appear on the market.

Harmful Effects?

To date, the only negative side effect reported from drinking green tea is insomnia due to the fact that it contains caffeine. However, green tea contains less caffeine than coffee: there are approximately thirty to sixty mg. of caffeine in six - eight ounces of tea, compared to over one-hundred mg. in eight ounces of coffee.

