



Healthy Eating Tip

Benefits of Tea

Tea has steadily grown in popularity over the last few years and is consumed in an assortment of ways, including hot, cold or iced, bottled, premium flavors and the newest Taiwanese trend of bubble tea made with tapioca pearls. According to the Tea Association of the USA, it is estimated that over 158 million Americans drink tea each day. The purchase of tea is also expected to increase over the next five years. With all this hype, it is time to learn about the history behind drinking tea and its benefits on the body.

Tea Facts

- A Chinese legend explains that tea was accidentally discovered when leaves from the *Camellia sinensis* plant fell into boiling water. From this discovery, tea was initially used as a tonic for medicinal purposes.
- The teabag was invented accidentally by an American named Thomas Sullivan. How? Samples of tea were sent to customers in small silk pouches. The customers did not know to empty the contents of the silk bag, and subsequently added everything to the pot. Sullivan used this opportunity to make ready-to-use teabags out of gauze, which is now the most popular method of making tea.
- The most popular types of tea (black, green and oolong) all come from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant with the only difference being the way each is processed.
- What is the difference between the popular types of tea? Black tea is fermented, oolong tea is semi-fermented, and green tea is unfermented.
- Like green tea, white tea is also unfermented. However, it comes from the unopened buds of the *Camellia sinensis* plant instead of the leaves.
- Green tea makes for a good option for those who want to avoid the post-caffeine jitters, because it contains less caffeine than black tea and coffee.

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Healthy Eating Continued...

Health Benefits

- Nutrients found in tea include: caffeine, calcium, potassium, phosphorous, manganese, magnesium, sodium and zinc. Many of these nutrients are essential to your diet in order for the body to function properly, including increased bone mineral density, proper heart function, muscle contractions, a healthy nervous system, an improved immune function and healthy blood cells.
- Scientific evidence indicates there may be an improvement in heart health with a decreased incidence of heart attacks and lower cholesterol levels.
- Antioxidants found in tea may help reduce inflammation, obesity, and the risk of developing chronic diseases, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. Studies have shown that drinking two cups of tea per day may provide added protection against these chronic diseases, presumably due to the antioxidant content in tea. Green tea provides a greater antioxidant protection than black tea.
- Ready-to-drink tea and bottled tea are more likely to contain additives (i.e. sugar or artificial sweeteners). This can potentially outweigh the benefits of tea, while also increasing the number of calories consumed.
- Tea without additives can be a great option to help increase or maintain hydration as it is primarily made up of water and provides many types of flavors.



How to Brew the Perfect Cup:

1. Begin with 8 ounces of cold water.
2. Heat until boiling (i.e. stove, microwave).
3. Use 1-2 teaspoons of leaves or single portion teabag.
4. Allow to steep per recommended times:
 - **Black:** 4-5 minutes
 - **Green:** 2-3 minutes
 - **White:** 2-3 minutes
 - **Oolong:** 3-4 minutes
5. Drink and enjoy!
6. Tea may be enjoyed plain or with additional spices and sweeteners (i.e. ginger, lemon, cinnamon sticks, or 1-2 tablespoons of honey)

Sources:

www.todaysdietitian.com

www.teabox.com

www.eatright.org

www.medlineplus.gov

www.foodnetwork.com