



Dr. A. Kumar
Consultant Herbalist & Dietician
D.Sc. (HS), U.S.A.

Green Tea and your health

These days, everybody knows a little bit about the green tea. Green tea has established itself, especially within the last one decade as a great natural source of good health. It has a long list of benefits like fights cancer and heart diseases, lowers cholesterol, burns fat, prevents diabetes and strokes and much more. In fact, green tea has a lot of use in a healthy, balanced diet.

Green tea is made using the leaves of the Chinese *Camellia sinensis* plant that are then applied to heat quickly after picking, either by steam or by dry cooking in hot pans. These methods minimize oxidation, which is what is thought to give the green tea benefits we have heard so much about.

Green tea's impact on cancer and heart disease seems very promising, and many people have experienced life changing benefits as a result of taking it daily. Below is a comprehensive list of benefits you will attain with a regular dose of green tea.

Lowers cancer risk: Although the studies of how green tea affects cancerous cells are still in their infancy, there have been human trials which indicate that it does inhibit cells from developing cancer. In Japan, a study of 500 women with Stage I and Stage II breast cancer found that increasing their green tea consumption before and after surgery significantly lowered the risk of recurrence.

Eases the pain of rheumatoid arthritis. Various researches have shown that polyphenol antioxidants in green tea benefits suffers of arthritis by reducing the incidence and severity of the disease. EGCG protects cartilage destruction and reduces joint swelling and pain. This leads many scientists and health professionals to recommend green tea as a legitimate remedy for treating arthritis.

Stabilizes cholesterol levels. Researchers believe that green tea lowers the cholesterol levels by reducing its absorption in the digestive tract and increasing the rate of which it is excreted. However, as the body does need cholesterol to build cell membranes, insulate nerve fibres and create hormones, green tea benefits by preventing the conversion of LDL cholesterol into its more dangerous, oxidized form. The amazing antioxidant effects of green tea protect the heart arteries from becoming clogged with plaque and thus saving from imminent heart disorders.

Prevents cardiovascular disease. A Japanese study showed significant reductions in deaths from cardiovascular disease among green tea drinkers. The study found that over an 11 year test period, individuals who drank more than 5 cups per day had a 16% less chance of death as compared to others. They also found that green tea was especially beneficially in preventing strokes, due in large part to the antioxidants and how they prevent clogged arteries.

Boosts immune system. Researches conducted by the Brigham and Women's Hospital in 2003 revealed that theanine, found in green tea, boosted the activity of the gamma delta T-cells which form part of the adaptive and innate immunity. The study followed a group of coffee drinkers and a group of tea drinkers who each drank 600ml of their drink daily. Blood samples taken four weeks later quite clearly showed that production of these anti-bacterial proteins were five times higher in those drinking green tea.

Promotes weight loss. Both green tea and green tea extract have been shown to fight obesity and lower LDL cholesterol – both of which ultimately lead to a reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes. The polyphenols in green tea are extremely useful for dissolving triglycerides, a substance in the liver and small intestine made up of mostly sugar and fat, and this is thought to be the reason green tea benefits fat loss. EGCG is also known to stimulate your metabolism and accelerate weight loss.

Slows the onset of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease: A recent report published in the journal *Phytomedicine* has found substantial evidence that the enzymes found in green tea protect the brain cells from damage. Another study conducted by the University of South Florida looked at the effects of antioxidant EGCG. It was shown to be a protein blocker which prevented the chemical reactions that can lead to nerve damage that can lead to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Helps fight infections. Another study about the EGCG content in green tea shows that it is able to prevent infections, including the HIV virus. EGCG binds with CD4 immune system T-cell receptors and stops HIV from doing the same to reduce the risk of infection. While it is still way too early to peg green tea as a cure for HIV, an Egyptian study has shown that combining antibiotics with green tea significantly boosts the effectiveness of the antibiotic. In fact, when tested against 28 disease-causing microorganisms, green tea enhanced the bacteria killing power in every single case.

Reduces and prevents acne. Green tea benefits acne in a number of different ways. It's antibacterial properties attack and kill the acne bacteria while the anti-inflammatory benefits of green tea reduce the swelling and redness. Antioxidants fight against free radicals which damage the skin and make it more susceptible to acne also help to balance hormone levels to help prevent future breakouts from happening.

Slows the aging process to prevent wrinkles. One of the latest benefits of green tea is the effect it has on your skin and the aging process. It is again down to the antioxidants that prevent cell oxidation and damage that can make you look older than you really are. Studies are mixed on this particular green tea benefit as new research has come to light which suggests the full benefits can only be had by applying green tea topically to your skin. However, many people have found that potent green tea

extracts do have a positive effect on their skin, leaving it softer, more supple and younger looking.

Besides the above, the magic of green tea has also been seen beneficial in ovarian, prostate and lung cancer, gallstones, improves insulin sensitivity in type II diabetes, protects against kidney disease, acts as calcium and build bones, prevents osteoporosis and dental diseases, sharpens the mind, fights the flu and a number of other diseases.

The green tea should always be bought fresh, good brand and from good stores. Use it normally, at least twice a day. However, still you may take the advice of your doctor if you are already on certain medications.

Take care of your health. Never forget your hearty breakfast, good lunch and normal supper. The problem I have seen in general with Pakistani and Indian communities, missing lunch and breakfast but taking heavy supper. This is totally wrong. Eating more at night is not going to digest. Hence it is better to take light supper but good lunch and breakfast so that the food is digested properly. As usual, I will also remind you of drinking at least 8 glasses of water every day, regular exercise or a 40 minute walk five days a week and on top of all, always smile, try to laugh as much as you can and leave all your stress for God to take care.

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Dr. A. Kumar
Consultant Herbalist & dietician
info@yorkscollege.com