

Tea: A Natural Remedy

Can tea be used as a beauty aid?

The health benefits of tea continue to astound and impress. Even as scientific study continues to discover the further potential of this renowned and sought-after plant, the historical implications of tea's many beneficial facets are a matter of record.

It has been used for centuries by various societies as not only a recreational beverage, a central point in numerous societal ceremonies, a medicinal substance used to produce a broad range of beneficial effects, but also as an external application.

The use of tea as a beauty aid, whether applied topically or combined with other elements to be administered through a various number of means, is a practice as old as humankind's awareness of the plant.

In fact, tea (whether in the traditional textbook definition as a product of *Camellia Sinensis* or herbal) is becoming increasingly used by the health and cosmetic industry as a selling point for an array of cosmetic products, including skin and hair care. However, this is nothing new to many cultures of the world that have been aware of its value for ages.

Tea In Skin Care

How is tea used for skin care?

The health benefits of tea for external skin care are both various and plentiful.

Tea can function as a full-body softener by adding a teapot of brewed Ginseng to warm bathwater. Allow the mixture to soak into the pores of your body for 10–15 minutes for the desired effect.

Chamomile tea can be an effective remedy for sunburned skin. Soak one bag of Chamomile tea in two tablespoons of witch hazel for 10 minutes. Add one teaspoon of honey and an egg white. After the teabag has had sufficient time to soak up all the ingredients, use the teabag to apply the mixture to the offended skin, offering instant relief.

The issue of smelly feet is not always associated with the finer aspects of tea culture, but is certainly a potential source of discomfort and shame in most tearooms where footwear is curiously absent from the list of required attire. Fortunately, the remedy of soaking said feet in a brew of strong tea (preferably room temperature) for 5–10 minutes is both popular and effective. The antibacterial content in tea helps to ward off odor-causing bacteria, offering sweet relief to the afflicted and to those around them.

Tea For Facial Health

Can tea be used to clear up acne?

Facial skin is often more sensitive and delicate than body skin, calling for special care and attention. Green tea leaves and other tea types can certainly help with common facial skin ailments.

- **Chapped lips:** Chapstick isn't always the answer to painful, cracked lips. Brewing 3 bags of white oak bark tea in a single cup of water makes for a soothing alternative application. Simply rub the cooled teabag over your lips for a simple and natural nature's kiss.
- **Cold sores:** Red clover teabags, brewed and left to cool, make for a soothing application that eases pain and dries up those annoying cold sores.
- **Acne:** Combat this evil enemy of humankind by brewing a simple cup of strawberry tea and, after giving it sufficient time to cool, spritzing directly onto the face after washing.
- **Puffy eyes and dark circles:** Placing a used, cooled (preferably refrigerated) teabag directly over each eye for 15–20 minutes is a natural and relaxing method of getting rid of puffy eyes and dark circles.

Green Tea And Thyme Skin Toner Recipe

Are there any recipes for skin toner that use green tea?

Tea can be combined with other herbs to provide methods of skin care that are often more cost effective than expensive products that ultimately provide similar, if not less significant, results. One of the health benefits of green tea is that it has a high concentration of antioxidants and also contains antibacterial properties that translate well into use for the promotion of healthy skin.

Here is a great recipe for green tea and thyme skin toner.

Ingredients:

- 5 green tea bags, or 3 heaping teaspoons of green tea leaves
- 1/3–1/2 cup of fresh chopped thyme
- 2 cups of vitamin or mineral water
- 1 small boiling pot

Instructions:

1. Combine all ingredients in boiling pot
2. Bring water to a boil
3. Lower heat, and allow ingredients to simmer for 10 minutes
4. Remove from heat
5. Steep until cool
6. Strain liquid into a small bowl and discard other ingredients
Note: You may also save the tea bags for a variety of other uses. See "Green Tea and Your Home" for additional interesting uses
7. Apply liquid directly to skin using a cotton ball or soft cloth

Tea For A Healthy Head Of Hair

Can tea be used to promote good hair health?

Believe it or not, tea can also be used as an effective method of promoting the health and vitality of your hair and scalp. While there have been unsubstantiated and non-scientific claims made that the consumption of green teas can reduce hair loss, there are several home-spun recipes.

- **Dandruff:** Adding 2 tablespoons of rosemary to a strong cup of tea and applying as a rinse (after it's cooled down) is said to clear up dandruff by acting off the rosemary's purifying and disinfectant properties.
- **Oily hair:** The astringent qualities in lemon tea make this a viable method of combating oily buildup in your hair. Use as a final rinse after shampooing.
- **Frizzy hair:** Using brewed licorice tea as a conditioning rinse after shampooing results in the softening of frizzy hair.
- **Flat hair:** Massaging nettle tea, said to improve circulation and promote growth, into your scalp and rinsing is said to infuse body into otherwise flat hair.

Green Tea And Your Home

What other purposes can green tea be used for?

As the health benefits of green tea continue to be debated and studied, it's important to know that green tea remains a product as viable for what it can offer your surroundings as well as your insides.

For those not content to hoard its potential benefits for themselves, and for whom the goal of maintaining a healthy home environment is third only to mental and physical well being, green tea can actually help.

Green tea leaves or used green tea bags are a sufficient alternative for your stubborn refrigerator when the standard baking soda no longer eats away the odor. Just allow the tea to sun dry, place in the refrigerator in a small bowl, and let it work.

Chinese folk medicine also gives us the remedy of the green tea-stuffed pillow, said to relieve insomnia, headaches, and even high blood pressure. This fun bit of trivia contains more myth than medicine, but for anyone who's ever had to suffer the indignity and cruelty of infomercials while waiting for sleep, it's a practice worth trying.

The Abc's Of Vitamins In Tea

What vitamins does tea contain?

One of the seldom-discussed health benefits of tea consumption is its vitamin contents. Tea is known to contain a number of vitamins, each equally essential to the proper care and maintenance of your body.

- **Vitamin A:** Frequently referred to as Retinol, Vitamin A is essential for healthy eyesight, but there's more to this essential component than meets the eye. Vitamin A also promotes healthy skin and milk production for breast feeding.
- **Vitamin B:** Also known as Riboflavin or B2, this vitamin plays a vital role in the health of the human body, helping to form blood cells. It's also essential in the body's breakdown of amino acids, and may aid in the treatment and prevention of cataracts.
- **Vitamin C:** Probably the most well-known letter in the great vitamin kingdom, Vitamin C is essential in strengthening the body's immune system. Also the most abundant vitamin found in tea, it is more readily found in green tea than any other form of tea. In fact, green teas contain ten times the concentration of Vitamin C than black tea.

Alphabet Soup: Rounding Out Tea's Other Essential Vitamins

What is the vitamin content of tea?

The vitamin content of tea does not stop at the "top three" of the vitamin hierarchy. The health benefits of tea, including green teas, includes:

Vitamin D: Naturally produced in the body when exposed to a healthy amount of sunlight, Vitamin D-deficient individuals tend to suffer from overwhelming fatigue. Vitamin D is also essential in the strengthening of bones and the prevention of osteoporosis.

Vitamin E: The benefits of Vitamin E read like a laundry list of to-dos and must-haves for the human body. Not only can its antioxidant properties potentially slow down the spread of breast and prostate cancer, but they may also decrease the aging rate of skin cells, reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack, and lower the risk of blood clot formation. It's important to note that too much Vitamin E in capsule form can cause an anti-coagulant response, and should be taken in moderate doses under consultation of a physician.

Vitamin K: This lesser-known vitamin is naturally produced by the liver, can reduce the risk of excessive bleeding, and also works to increase the body's bone density.

Slowing The Racing Hand Of Time: Antioxidants In Green Tea

Can green tea combat aging skin?

The high concentration of antioxidants in green tea spurs the hope that a high consumption of green teas may achieve the impossible by turning back the clock on aging skin. While the literal "fountain of youth" is unlikely to exist, the closest thing to it may be green tea, and its increasing presence in skin care products and vitamin supplements.

By definition, antioxidants bind to free radicals, which are responsible for aging skin and causing wrinkles. A good daily dose of antioxidants can limit the body's exposure to cellular damage. There are a good number of skin care products available that incorporate green tea into their ingredients.

In addition to the number of readily found skin care products that promote the positive effects and health benefits of green tea, there are also an equal number of green tea extracts available in either liquid or capsule form. While these supplements make it easy for the body to get a higher dose of green tea properties, it's important to bear in mind the potential overexposure to caffeine that may result if taken in high doses.

Green Tea In Cosmetics

Is green tea used in cosmetics?

As the positive reputation of green tea continues to grow, cosmetics that use green teas as a primary ingredient have become increasingly popular. The benefits of using cosmetics that are green tea-based are plentiful, not the least of which is the resulting trend in moving away from skin care products laden with lab chemicals in favor of the natural and organic.

Skin toners containing green tea benefit from green tea's inherent astringent qualities, which work to firm and tone the skin by constricting pores and building protective layers of tissue in the skin.

When using green tea cosmetics, it's advisable not to mix them with regular, non-natural treatments, as the chemicals contained can likely interfere with and often cancel out the positive effects.

Green tea has even made its way down the proverbial cosmetics aisle, venturing out of the skin care realm and into that of nail care. A good number of nail polish, polish removers and nail strengthening products boast the beneficial effects of green tea to promote positive nail growth.