

Health Benefits of Tea, by Chas Kroll ITMA Executive Director International Tea Masters Association,  
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Although green, white and red teas have been used in Asia and Africa for thousands of years to prevent illness and disease, promote longevity and improve mental functions, it is only within the past twenty years or so that they, like black tea, have become popular in the West.

There is ample evidence today supporting the health properties of all teas. Polyphenols and Flavonoids found in tea prevent free radicals from damaging DNA, which tend to nip cancer initiation in the bud.

Second, they seem to prevent uncontrolled cell growth, slowing cancerous cell development.

And third, certain polyphenols may even destroy cancer cells without harming the surrounding healthy cells.

When Japanese researchers combined cancer medications with polyphenols, the treatment was 20 times more effective than the cancer drugs alone, according to a study published in the Japanese Journal of Cancer Research.

There are several polyphenols and flavonoids found in tea. These powerful antioxidants have been shown in numerous studies to fight viruses, slow aging, and have a beneficial effect on health. Clinical tests have shown that they destroy free radicals, limiting their damage to healthy cells, and have far-

reaching positive effects on the entire body. Free radicals are highly reactive molecules and fragments of molecules that can damage the body at the cellular level, leaving it susceptible to cancer, heart disease, and other degenerative illnesses.

Recent studies have shown that epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), an antioxidant in tea, is 100 times more effective than vitamin C and 25 times more effective than vitamin E at protecting cells and DNA from damage believed to be linked to cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses. It has twice the antioxidant benefit of resveratrol found in red wine.

While often included in dietary supplements, tea is one of the few natural sources for your daily dose of L-theanine. This special amino acid boosts alpha wave activity in our brains which, in turn, promotes a relaxed state of concentration and reduces stress. In other words, it improves alertness and focus without making you jittery! L-theanine may deliver health benefits that extend far beyond mood improvement, including enhanced immune system function and lower blood pressure.

Rooibos red tea from South Africa is completely pure and natural, containing no additives, preservatives, flavorants or colorants. It is super-rich in antioxidants (50 times greater than green and white tea) that boost the body's immune system and help slow the aging process. It is also a natural source of several minerals, supplementing our daily intake of iron, calcium, magnesium and zinc needed for maintaining a healthy immune system. Its antioxidants protect the heart by reducing cholesterol buildup. It is reported that four cups a day can lower the risk of heart disease by as much as 69%. Research indicates that its antioxidants have antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, antithrombotic, antiviral, antimutagenic and antiallergic properties.

These polyphenols reduce the number of chromosome aberrations, inhibit tumor growth, dissolve cholesterol and improve general health by increasing energy levels and boosting the body's natural immune system.