

My Cup of Tea

Tea is the most widely consumed beverage after water, and has been known as a medical plant for years. Recent studies have been recognized that the relationship between health and tea may actually be true.

Tea4health, promoted by UK Tea Council in its official website, suggests 4 cups a day could maintain one's health. Apart from the manganese, potassium, zinc, folic acid and fluoride it contains, tea is naturally rich in flavonoids, which are antioxidants. There are four types of tea commonly found in the market – black tea, oolong tea, green tea and white tea which are all harvested from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, the species of plant whose leaves and leaf buds are used to produce tea, but they are processed differently to attain different levels of oxidation, providing polyphenolic compounds including catechins, theaflavins (yellow-orange pigments) and thearubigins (red pigments) at different levels.



White tea is made by uncured and unoxidized tea leaves. It often contains buds and young tea leaves which are found to be rich in catechins. One example of white tea is Shou Mei. Green tea has been undergone the minimal oxidation during processing and contains lesser amount of catechins than that of white tea's, example of green tea is Longjing. Oolong tea is a semi-oxidized tea, has been undergone a duration of oxidation which falls between that of green and black tea, examples of Oolong tea are Tieguanyin and Dà Hóng Páo. The catechin concentration of Oolong tea falls between that of green and black tea. Black tea is more oxidized than the rest which resulting in a relatively low catechin concentration level, yet high concentration of theaflavins and thearubigins. Examples of black tea are Pu'Erh tea, Earl Grey, English Breakfast and orange or lemon flavoured black tea, which are stronger in flavour. In simple terms, the more oxidized the tea is, the less the catechins levels but more the theaflavins and thearubigins it contains.

Either green or black tea, epidemiologic observations and lab studies have indicated that these polyphenolic compounds present in tea may reduce the risk of cancer and coronary heart disease. Tea consumption does not produce a diuretic effect unless more than 300mg of caffeine was consumed at one time; i.e. six or seven cups of tea at one sitting. Thus, tea will not result in dehydration but improves overall one's health, so it provides double benefit.

Charmain Tan
Registered Dietitian (USA)

E-mail: ctan@my17.com

The above is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to diagnose or provide treatment for any conditions. You should consult a healthcare professional if you have any health concerns. The above is provided by the registered dietitian, VOLE' and China Resources Vanguard (Hong Kong) Co. Ltd. shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.