

A cup of tea to prevent stroke

March 30 2010, by Hans Wolkers

(PhysOrg.com) -- A cup of tea is good for you. At least three cups a day can reduce the chances of having a stroke by 20 percent.

This is the conclusion drawn by Peter Hollman of Human [nutrition](#) and food safety institute RIKILT, The Netherlands, and outlined in an article in the last issue of *The [Journal of Nutrition](#)*. Hollman's research has made it clear that flavonols are responsible for this effect.

That tea is good for the heart and [blood vessels](#) has been known for some time. Scientists guessed that this healthy effect could broadly be put down to the role of flavonoids, a big group of substances that includes flavonols. Flavonoids occur in vegetable products and one of their effects is to work as antioxidants. 'Studies on the health impact of flavonoid-rich foods consistently showed a positive effect on the heart and blood vessels', says Hollman. The big question was, though, exactly which flavonoids were behind this effect.'

Hollman analysed the relationship between intake of various sorts of flavonoid and the incidence of stroke. His meta-analysis incorporated data from over 100 thousand test subjects from six published studies. He found that specific [flavonoids](#), the flavonols, had an effect on the risk of stroke. 'With an intake of flavonols equivalent to the amount in three cups of tea, you can cut the risk of stroke by 20 percent', says Hollman. 'That is a big drop.'

So should we all increase our tea drinking to get this protection from stroke? Not really, because you can also get your flavonols from fruit

and vegetables, chocolate or [red wine](#). Good news for confirmed coffee drinkers who can happily do without tea.

Provided by Wageningen University

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