

# Tea's benefits extend to old bones: Japan researchers

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Researchers in Japan say black tea could help treat osteoporosis, a bone condition affecting older people, but admit you need to drink an awful lot of it.

Scientists say the humble brew contains an antioxidant that can prevent the loss of [bone density](#) commonly seen in old age that makes the elderly more vulnerable to fractures.

The news is the latest claim for a drink that is a staple of countries around the world, and one over which never-ending arguments rage about how to brew the perfect cup.

Researchers led by Keizo Nishikawa of Osaka University found that theaflavin-3 (TF-3), the antioxidant, works by inhibiting the function of an enzyme called DNA methyltransferase, which destroys [bone tissue](#).

The research, published in the online edition of the US journal *Nature Medicine* on Monday, found that mice suffering from osteoporosis who were given TF-3 showed recovering levels of bone volume, similar to those of healthy mice.

But it might be a bit early to rush to put the kettle on—the research found that a 60 kilogramme (130-pound) adult would have to drink 60 cups of tea over three days to see a noticeable difference, Jiji Press reported.

Osteoporosis particularly affects women in later life and is a growing problem in rapidly ageing societies such as Japan.

**More information:** *Nature Medicine* [DOI: 10.1038/nm.3774](https://doi.org/10.1038/nm.3774)

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