

Gung ho for green tea

October 19 2017, by Maura Hohman, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Whether to relax, warm up or even curb your appetite, there's nothing quite like sipping a soothing cup of tea.

And while there's no shortage of brews available, green tea in particular has many potential advantages.

There are actually three types of tea leaves: green tea, [black tea](#) and oolong. The difference is all in the processing. Green tea is made from unfermented leaves. Like the others, it's naturally caffeinated, though it has far less caffeine than coffee and even the others teas. It makes a great afternoon pick-me-up alternative and can improve your focus, energy and alertness.

It also has the highest concentration of the antioxidants polyphenols of all teas. Antioxidants help keep your cells healthy. Based on studies done in the lab, researchers from Penn State University believe green tea has the potential to lower the risk for heart disease and boost weight loss.

A 2016 study published in the journal *Nutrition Research* found that green tea could help prevent LDL ("bad") cholesterol from oxidizing and contributing to dangerous plaque in the arteries.

And, according to a review of tea's health benefits published in *Current Pharmaceutical Design*, green tea may offer some protection against certain forms of cancer—studies are underway to learn more.

If you're used to black tea, you might find that green tea is an acquired taste.

No matter how you drink traditional tea, try green tea plain at first. You may decide that lemon or sweetener is unnecessary. To get the most nutrients from your tea, steep it in hot water for three to five minutes, and then enjoy right away.

Keep in mind that too much caffeine from any source can have negative side effects. Even with [green tea](#), don't have more than 5 cups a day.

More information: The U.S. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health has a wealth of information about [green tea](#), as well as links to research studies on its potential health effects.

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Citation: Gung ho for green tea (2017, October 19) retrieved 22 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-10-gung-ho-green-tea.html>

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