

Coffee and tea consumption reduce MRSA risk

15 July 2011, by Deborah Braconnier

While an apple a day may keep the doctor away, new research published in the *Annals of Family Medicine* say that hot tea or coffee may keep the methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, bug away, or at least out of your nose.

increased risk of active infection.

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The study, led by Eric Matheson from the University of South Carolina, looked at 5,500 Americans and their [coffee](#) and hot tea consumption in association with the presence of the MRSA bacteria in the [nasal cavity](#).

In general, around one percent of the population in the United States carries the MRSA in their nose or on their skin but does not become sick with MRSA. Laboratory studies have shown that tea extracts that were inhaled or topically applied showed anti-MRSA activity. This laboratory evidence prompted Matheson to look at how the consumption of tea and coffee might play a role in MRSA nasal carriage.

Out of the 5,500 participants, 1.4 percent was positive for MRSA in their nose. However, when the group was broken down into groups based on tea and [coffee consumption](#), the number lowered. Those that drank either tea or coffee saw a reduction of around 50 percent, while those that consumed both beverages saw a reduction of 67 percent.

While the study was unable to show a direct [causal relationship](#) between coffee and tea consumption and nasal MRSA, the researchers do believe there is a connection. They are looking at the potential [antibacterial properties](#) of glyoxal, methylglyoxal, trigonelline and diacetyl in coffee and tannic acid and catechins in tea.

Debate is still out however as to whether a reduction in a person's MRSA nasal carriage risk by drinking coffee and tea would also reduce a person's risk of falling ill to MRSA. It is also still debated as to whether MRSA carriers are at an

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