

2 tea health facts

answers about tea and caffeine

where does caffeine come from?

Caffeine is a natural substance found in the leaves, seeds or fruits of at least 100 different plant species worldwide. The most commonly

known sources of caffeine are coffee, cocoa beans, cola nuts and tea leaves.

what does caffeine do?

We all know caffeine is a common stimulant, but despite all the bad 'health' press caffeine gets, there are some benefits to moderate caffeine intake. It can improve physical endurance, increase alertness, lift your mood and enhance your perception of fatigue.

Many people believe that caffeine has a diuretic effect which affects hydration levels. Research has shown that for caffeine to have a diuretic effect a person has to consume the equivalent of 5-6 cups of tea in one sitting.

how much caffeine is in tea?

A cup of tea normally contains less caffeine than a cup of coffee. The amount of caffeine present in tea depends on the type of tea, the serving size and the preparation method. In a recent survey conducted in the UK by the FSA Food

Surveillance Unit, the typical amount of caffeine in a cup of tea was found to be 40mg. To put this in perspective, a typical cup of instant coffee will have 75mg of caffeine and a can of Coke will have up to 70mg.

what is a safe intake of caffeine?

Up to 300mg a day (roughly 6 cups of black tea) is considered a safe intake for the majority of adults. Some people are sensitive to caffeine and will feel the effects at smaller doses. You can develop a tolerance to caffeine the more frequently you eat or drink it.

Caffeine does not accumulate in the body over the course of time and is normally gone within several hours. The rate of caffeine elimination varies between people and this may be because of differing metabolisms or due to lifestyle factors. Children also metabolise caffeine at a faster rate than adults.

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remember: great tea takes three

While the fact that antioxidants are in tea is widely recognised, the actual method of maximising their health benefits is the length of time your tea is brewed.

The best way to ensure this is to brew (let your teabag sit in boiling water) for a minimum of three minutes. This is the **Great Tea Takes Three** rule.



So, what does the three minutes do for your tea?

- 1 The first minute is for colour - watch as the freshly boiled water starts to reveal the colour of your tea
- 2 The second minute is for flavour - the colour of your tea deepens and the taste develops
- 3 The third minute is for health - your tea will develop all the health benefits from the great antioxidants found in all tea

The third minute lets loose all those great antioxidants that will help you fight the free radicals running wild around your body. It's the easiest and tastiest way to get antioxidants into your system.

how to maximise the antioxidants in tea

It is also interesting to note that antioxidant levels in tea are greatly reduced in the decaffeination process.

So although de-caffeinated blends of tea have less caffeine they also have less of the valuable antioxidants.

¹ **Tea and Antioxidant Properties:** <http://www.tea.co.uk/healthresources.php>

² **Flavonoid Info:** <http://flavo.vit.fi/roleofflavonoids.htm#antioxidants>