

1 tea health facts

answers about antioxidants

introduction

With pollution, harsh UV rays and toxins rife in our environment it's no wonder our bodies take a beating and fall victim to heart disease, strokes

and cancer. Scientists believe free radicals are to blame and that antioxidants may be the answer.

what are free radicals and why are they bad?

As the cells in our bodies get older they oxidise and produce free radicals. Free radicals are highly reactive molecules, which start chain reactions that damage healthy cells causing aging and making us more susceptible to

disease¹. Although oxidation is a natural process and happens because of regular metabolism, it is accelerated by external elements like pollution, sun damage and smoking¹.

what are antioxidants and why are they good?

An antioxidant is a molecule capable of slowing or preventing the oxidation of other molecules. Like scavengers, they go about mopping up or neutralising the reactive free radicals, saving you from cellular damage¹.

However, once an antioxidant neutralises a free radical it cannot be used again, which is why it is important to re-supply your body with vitamins and other carriers of antioxidants such as fruit, vegetables and tea².

antioxidants in tea

Tea has high levels of antioxidants called flavonoids. Although black, green and white teas all come from different parts of the same plant – *Camellia Sinensis* – they all contain different types and amounts of flavanoids. How the tea is grown, manufactured and prepared also determines the characteristics of the flavanoids present¹. Green teas contain more of the simple flavanoids called catechins, while black tea has more complex flavanoids called theaflavins and thearubigins¹.

The health effects of flavonoids have been intensively investigated for the last ten years. It has been found that flavonoids, particularly catechins found in green tea, may reduce the risk of major health problems¹.

As well as eating fruit and vegetables, antioxidant intake can be topped up by drinking more tea, helping to promote overall health and wellbeing¹.

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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>