



# The Wellness Family

Dr. Zhu Keeps You Informed

## The History of Tea

Tea plants originated in East Asia, probably in the province of Yunnan. Prior to drinking tea, people would nibble on the leaves, add them to soup or stews, or ferment them down into a mush. It is thought that tea drinking was used originally for medicinal purposes.

The first recorded shipment of tea by a European nation was in 1607 when the Dutch East India Company shipped a supply of tea from Macao to Java. Tea became a fashionable drink in the Hague in the Netherlands, and the Dutch introduced the drink to Germany, France, and across the Atlantic to what is present day New York.

In Britain and Ireland, tea was originally enjoyed as a luxury item on special occasions. The price of tea in Europe fell steadily during the 19th century, especially after Indian tea began to arrive in large quantities. By the late 19th century tea had become an everyday beverage for all levels of society. The popularity of tea played a role in historical events - the Tea Act of 1773 provoked the Boston Tea Party that escalated into the American Revolution.

Since then, tea is consumed almost everywhere. For some, it is a drink enjoyed daily as part of a routine. For others, tea is a sacred part of their culture and tradition. Regardless of one's relationship with tea, one cannot deny that those tiny tea leaves have been on an incredibly journey.



*Tea leaves are powerhouses, fighting all sorts of maladies.*

## Teas and Their Healing Properties

For thousands of years, tea has been regarded in the East as containing healing properties. But it has not been until recently that the West has bought into this idea. Studies have pointed to tea aiding in treating cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Studies have also shown tea to contain antimicrobial qualities. Antimicrobial products kill or slow the spread of microorganism, including bacteria, viruses, protozoans, and fungi such as mold and mildew.

Today, tea comes in all forms - from leaves to packages, bottles to cans. But those who would consider themselves tea experts believe green, black, white, oolong and pu-erh tea to be the healthiest and most potent. These types of teas are derived from the *Camellia sinensis* plant found in China and India. This plant contains antioxidants known

as flavonoids. Of these flavonoids, the most potent is ECGC, which is known to battle against free radicals that may contribute to cancer, heart disease, and clogged arteries. These teas are also known to contain caffeine in healthy doses, as well as theanine which aids in cognitive and mental capabilities. Herbal teas are also known to contain powerful benefits.

Here are some of the benefits of each of these teas.

- **Green Tea**

This tea possesses a high level of EGCG. It has been known to help heart health by lowering bad cholesterol and high blood pressure. The antioxidants found in green tea can also inhibit bladder, breast, lung, stomach, pancreatic, and colorectal cancers. It may also prevent arteries from being clogged, help burn fat, and diminish oxidative stress on the brain and reduce the risk of neurological disorders.

- **Black Tea**

This tea contains the highest doses of caffeine. Made from fermented tea leaves, Black tea has been known to protect lungs from damage caused by cigarette smoke. Because the leaves are fermented, the tea has a darker color and richer flavor than green tea. Black tea also has healing properties beyond drinking it. When steamed and cooled, Black tea can be placed on minor cuts, scrapes and bruises to relieve pain and reduce swelling.

- **White Tea**

This tea is known to have the most powerful anticancer properties and if often used as an alternative, though not a prescribed cure, to cancer treatments.

- **Oolong Tea**

This is a traditional variety hailing from China. It is made from the same plant used to make green and black teas. Oolong tea is only partially oxidized and therefore has a significant color and specific taste to it. It contains L-theanine which is an amino acid that can reduce stress and increase alertness. It also can aid in the prevention of cognitive diseases such as Parkinson's. Oolong can also lower cholesterol and has a high number of polyphenols which can lower inflammation.

- **Pu-erh Tea**

Pu-erh is produced mainly in the Yunnan district in the southwestern part of China. It is used for improving mental alertness and sharp thinking. Recently, interest has developed in using this tea in lowering cholesterol because, unlike other teas, it contains small amounts of a chemical called lovastatin.

## Herbal Tea and Their Benefits

Herbal teas are brewed from dried fruits, flowers, spices, and herbs. Here are some of them:

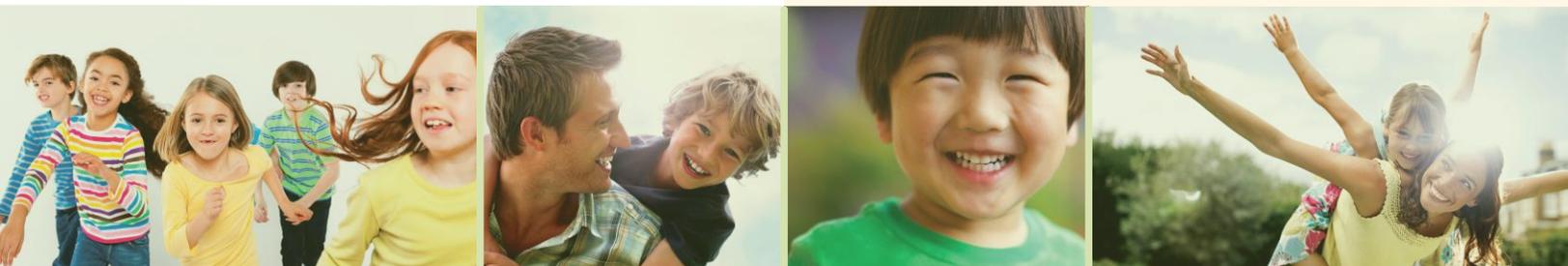
- **Chamomile Tea**  
This tea is frequently known as a calming and sleep aid. It has helped women who are pregnant or menstruating sleep better and have fewer symptoms of depression.
- **Peppermint Tea**  
This tea has several benefits including digestive aid, antioxidants, anticancer and antiviral properties.
- **Ginger Tea**  
Ginger Tea is both spicy and flavorful and aids its drinker in fighting maladies such as inflammation and nausea during pregnancy as well as motion sickness. It is possible that this tea may also help prevent stomach ulcers and relieve both constipation and indigestion.
- **Echinacea Tea**  
Echinacea tea is known as an excellent remedy for the common cold and can aid in boosting the immune system. At the very least, Echinacea is known to soothe sore throats and clear up a congested nose. It also can be used as a preventative measure in fighting off viruses or infections.
- **Sage Tea**  
This tea has been known to improve cognitive function as well as improve mood, mental function, and memory. Sage tea has also been known to improve blood lipid levels.
- **Lemon Balm Tea**  
This tea is known for improving arterial health and elasticity. It has also been known to improve mood and mental wellness, as well as reduce stress and improve math processing skills.

## The Overprocessing of Teas

While teas are loaded with health benefits, it is important to realize that not all teas are created equal. The more processed a tea is, the less benefits they contain. And with every process there usually tends to be something that is added to the tea that makes it even less healthy. For example, if a manufacturer takes a tea that naturally contains caffeine and decaffeinate it, they usually do so by using carbon dioxide, ethyl acetate, or methylene chloride. If the buyer wishes to drink caffeine-free tea, the healthier choices would be a naturally caffeine free tea such as chamomile or peppermint.

One of the general rules of thumb when considering how processed or healthy a tea is for you is the amount of oxidation that occurs when processing a tea. Oxidation is a process through which tea leaves are exposed to the air to dry and darken them, contributing to the flavor, aroma, and strength of different teas. When this happens, teas can lose some of their potency. Of all the teas, green tea is the least oxidized and therefore the most potent and beneficial. In fact, during harvesting green tea leaves will go through a heating process that halts the oxidation process.

Now green tea may not be for everyone. In fact, there are some who do not prefer brewed tea at all. If you do wish to purchase store bought tea, stay away from those that contain sweeteners. If you enjoy a brewed cup of tea, your options are slightly greater. Loose leaf teas may contain more bioactives because they use higher quality leaves. But leaves in teabags are cut smaller, and this potentially enhances the extraction process, providing more health benefits. Lower quality teas may also include more stems, which are higher in L-theanine than the leaves. So, while fancy loose leaf might taste better, you probably get more for your money spent from a simple tea bag. When brewing, it is important to remember that patience is key. The longer you brew, the better the benefits. Research has shown that 20-30 minutes at 176° F produces the maximum level of bioactives. However, this isn't always practical or necessarily pleasing to the palate. Generally, brewing for two to three minutes extracts about 60% of the catechins, 75% of the caffeine and 80% of the L-theanine.



*Dear Patient,  
Dr. Zhu is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.*

**This newsletter is provided to you by:**

Element Chiropractic Wellness  
Dr. Jennifer Zhu  
68 Harold Avenue #101  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
408.246.1738