

[IMAGE]

Reversing Heart Problems: The Benefits of Tea

People drink more tea than any other beverage in the world other than water. There are many varieties of tea, from the tiny cups of green tea you sip at Chinese restaurants to the pitchers of iced tea you gulp down on hot summer days. In addition to the taste so many enjoy, recent information adds to the results of previous studies that show tea decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

A recent study in *Circulation* evaluated if black tea reversed endothelial dysfunction in patients with coronary artery disease. Endothelial dysfunction is the impairment of blood vessels of the heart; it has been linked to coronary artery disease and is inhibited by the antioxidants found in tea, called flavonoids. Fifty patients with a history of coronary artery disease consumed either water or tea daily for four weeks. The effects of the tea were measured two hours after it was drank (for short-term effects) and at the end of the four weeks (for long-term effects). Tea consumption significantly reduced endothelial dysfunction in both the short and long term, while water had no effect on the patients.

This study indicates that black tea consumption may reverse the symptoms of coronary artery disease. It also supports the growing body of research that indicates that antioxidant flavonoids, found in tea and other natural sources like fruits (especially red grapes) and soy, may decrease cardiovascular dysfunction. Be sure to keep drinking tea for a healthier heart - and for general health. Tea also contains the vitamins riboflavin, thiamin, C, and B6, and is rich in potassium and manganese.

Reference:

Duffy SJ, Keaney Jr JF, Holbrook M, et al. Short- and long-term black tea consumption reverses endothelial dysfunction in patients with coronary artery disease. *Circulation* 2001; 104, pp. 151-156.

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