

[IMAGE]

Why Is Tea Good for BP?

By Editorial Staff

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for the two sudden events we perhaps fear the most when it comes to ourselves or our loved ones: heart attack and stroke. Fortunately, with the exception of genetic predisposition to high BP, lifestyle behaviors are generally effective in keeping blood pressure in the safe range.

Drinking tea, both green and black, is one such behavior, and researchers are beginning to understand why it works. Case in point: a team from the University of California - Irvine that discovered compounds in both varieties of tea relax blood vessels by activating "channel proteins" in the vessel wall. Specifically, two flavonoid compounds (scientific terms: epicatechin gallate and epigallocatechin-3-gallate) activate an ion channel protein that allows potassium ions to diffuse out of the cells. Because the specific ion channel protein (KCNQ5) is found in the smooth muscle lining blood vessels, it's activation helps relax the vessels, in so doing reducing blood pressure.

hot tea - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark While the researchers, whose findings were published in *Cellular Physiology and Biochemistry*, emphasize the potential for these compounds to be utilized in BP-lowering drugs, they're overlooking its more straightforward, natural potential: drinking green and black tea to lower blood pressure (if it's high) or keep it in the safe range in the first place. Talk to your doctor for additional information on the health and wellness benefits of tea.

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