



## Dr. Sanjay Gupta: Another benefit to tea-time

**(CNN) --The health benefits of tea have often been lauded and now researchers have found one more reason to drink up. A new study shows a direct relationship between consuming tea and lowering cholesterol levels.**

CNN medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta spoke to anchor Bill Hemmer about the latest discovery.

**GUPTA:** You know [what] the second most common drink in the world is, Bill?

**HEMMER:** I would say tea.

**GUPTA:** Tea, yes, you're right.

**HEMMER:** Chai.

**GUPTA:** Chai, exactly. There's been a lot of talk as you mentioned, Bill, about the health benefits of tea. Certainly that's something people have known about abstractly for quite some time. But now the first study showing a causal relationship, cause and effect relationship, between tea and cholesterol.

There was a lot of studies incidentally done on animals before, and that data was extrapolated to human beings, but this is the first study actually looking at tea and cholesterol, showing in fact that taking extracts from tea in the form of a pill can actually lower your cholesterol.

Take a look at what researchers decided to do. They looked at over 200 people, actually close to 220 people, all of them Asian. This was done in China. People were already on a low-fat diet because they had a moderate to severely elevated cholesterol.

And what they found was over a 12-week period. They divided the people into two groups. One group got the pill, which was a soft gel capsule with the tea extract. The other group got just a placebo, a sugar pill, and they found that the capsule group, the people who are getting the tea, actually had an 11 percent increase in total cholesterol and a 16 percent decrease in the bad type of cholesterol. Again, that's just over 12 weeks. So pretty significant results there.

They're not quite ready to recommend tea for everybody to take all of the time. They still say that you need to see some of the long-term effects of taking tea every day, and taking these capsules every day. Two, is to find out how it interacts with some of existing medications. A lot of people with elevated cholesterols are already on medications. Would this capsule somehow interact with that?

So two questions out there still, Bill, but certainly a positive step for these tea extracts and lowering your cholesterol.

**HEMMER:** What about the arguments green tea, black tea? What should we know about that?

**GUPTA:** Yes, that's been a longstanding debate as well. Just a couple of things to keep in mind, green tea probably has more antioxidants than black tea. So the green tea [is] probably better. Both teas, if you're going to be making tea, you need to steep it for at least five minutes. That will release most of the antioxidant quality. But if you're looking for the antioxidants in general, green tea better than black tea.

And let me just tell you as well, Bill, as you mentioned at the top, there are a lot of different health benefits that have been attributed to tea for quite some time. Take a look at the list of possible health benefits that people have known about for some time.

Heart disease (is one). People are hearing a lot about that. Benefiting bone density, it's anti-inflammatory, anti-carcinogenic as well. All sorts of different benefits. They've been drinking it in China for thousands of years. They have lower rates of esophageal and stomach cancer among Chinese men as well, even after you control for other health considerations and societal considerations. There may be a lot of benefits to tea out there that we'll still figure out in the long run.

**HEMMER:** OK, Sanjay. Thanks. Next time we'll talk beer?

**GUPTA:** Third most common drink.

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