

Staying healthy and in shape with green tea

Tea catechins promote fat burning

Green tea is regarded as being one of the most healthy foods. Its health-promoting properties can mostly be attributed to the catechins contained in green tea, including, above all, the plant extract epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) that is known for its highly anti-oxidative and cell-protecting effects. Due to this fact, green tea has probably become the most fashionable drink during the past decades. And, indeed, there is hardly any other food that has made the headlines as frequently as green tea. Previous studies have shown, for instance, that green tea polyphenols protect against cancer and atherosclerosis.

However, there is also another factor that attracts considerable attention: Several scientific studies have documented the potential of green tea to reduce body weight. Considering that obesity is more than simply an aesthetic problem, and primarily a major health risk, these research efforts are both logical and necessary. Below, we take a closer look at this issue.

Health risks of being overweight

In the Western world, obesity is a serious problem. As in the United States or Germany, the latest figures from the UK give cause for concern. According to sources, an estimated 60.8 per cent of adults are overweight, with almost a quarter of adults in England being classified as obese. In view of the fact that with an increased weight gain there is a larger risk of health complications (i.e. diabetes mellitus, disorders of fat metabolism or cardiovascular diseases), action is necessary to counteract this problem.

This is also clear from a Swedish study, published in the British Medical Journal, which stated that obesity is just as harmful as smoking. According to this study, both being overweight and smoking cigarettes on a regular basis (i.e. 10 cigarettes daily) increase the risk of developing cancer by 30 percent. Interestingly, therefore, overweight non-smokers have the same risk of cancer as overweight smokers. Another conclusion drawn by the study was that being overweight at the age of 18 increases the risk of early death by a third, whilst obesity even doubled the risk.

However, the situation is quite different in Japan: In spite of obesity being no longer a rarity in this country, only three percent of the Japanese population are considered as being seriously overweight. This value is surpassed five times over in Germany – and even eleven times over in the USA! Apparently, the healthy Japanese cuisine plays a major part in this situation. Commonly used and carefully or raw prepared food such as fish, seaweed, cabbage, mushrooms, soybeans etc. are low in fat and calories and provide the body with important micronutrients such as isoflavones, omega-3 fatty acids, trace elements, antioxidants and others. In addition, one should not forget that green tea is the national drink of Japan and consumed at virtually any occasion. Possibly, this fact is also one of the reasons why obesity occurs less often in Japan than in Europe or the USA. Scientific studies back this assumption.



Lose weight with green tea

Green tea is capable of reducing cholesterol and fat absorption and, moreover, ensures that carbohydrates are only released slowly in the body. As a result, the insulin level is held constant and, thereby, the fat burning is positively affected. As is the case with correcting disease, this effect can be attributed to green tea catechins. In the nervous system, these catechins release a transmitter that supports the burning of fat, thereby causing a higher energy or calorie consumption. Research carried out by the Charité university medical school in Berlin and published in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition confirms this finding, indicating that EGCG found in green tea is a useful substance in controlling body weight naturally. Accordingly, only 300 mg of the green tea extract, when taken within two hours after mealtime, are sufficient to increase fat burning by 33 percent (see <http://www.nutraingredients.com/Research/Green-tea-extract-effective-for-weight-loss-at-low-doses>). Similar results have been reported by American scientists who tested the weight-reducing effect of green tea on mice. Supplementation with dietary EGCG caused a reduction in weight gain, body fat and visceral fat weight (see <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18716169>).

However, in addition to green tea, there is also another type of tea that serves as an excellent aid in dieting. With its particular high amount of polyphenols, Chinese oolong tea is a very effective fat "killer". This finding has been reinforced by a Japanese study that tested the effects of catechins on body fat reduction in men. For 12 weeks, the study participants received one bottle of oolong tea daily, containing 690 mg of catechins. As it turned out, body weight, BMI, waist circumference and body fat mass were significantly lower in the green tea extract group than in the control group. For instance, participants of the test group noticed a 3.4 cm decrease in abdominal girth on average, whereas participants of the control group, who had received tea with only 22 mg catechins, had an average 1.6 cm decrease only (see <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15640470>).

Due to its unique production process and special taste, oolong tea is situated somewhere between green, unfermented tea and black, fully-fermented tea. Like green tea, oolong blocks the absorption of fats from food and promotes fat burning. Several years ago, a Japanese doctor called attention to this fact. In a small study involving 12 participants between 18 and 39 years of age, he observed that during a one-month test period, consuming at least one liter of oolong tea daily led to a reduction of body fat in most of the partici-

pants. According to the information provided by the probands, there was a 2 cm reduced waist circumference in nine persons and eight participants observed the size of their upper arms being reduced by 2 cm (see <http://www.nutraingredients.com/Research/Oolong-tea-fights-fat-and-cholesterol>).

Conclusion: Once more, the present findings document the versatility and health potential of green tea, and the plant substances contained therein, for our bodies. Green tea not only tastes good, but can also be used as an excellent calorie-free thirst quencher that makes dieting easier. Furthermore, during a diet it provides the body with important nutrients, thereby preventing symptoms of deficiency. Therefore, anyone who would like to reduce his or her weight should include green tea in their diet plan.

What you can do now

- Find out in detail about the benefits of vitamins and other micronutrients for prevention and therapy of the major endemic diseases.
- Give your relatives and friends information about this subject and about the need to modernise our health system.
- Visit the Dr. Rath Health Alliance website to find out more about getting involved in promoting a better public health system.

If you call us, please tell us the name of the person who has provided you with this Health Letter (see box at the bottom of this page).