

Potential Health Concerns of Tea

Consuming tea in moderate quantities is generally considered to be safe and a great way to supplement your diet with nutrients that support the various systems of the body. The consumption of tea, however, may have some negative effects for a select few. Consult your doctor if you are prone to, or currently experiencing, any of the following:

Anemia or Other Iron Absorption Conditions

Studies have shown that tea may inhibit the body's ability to absorb dietary iron. There are two forms of iron obtained from our diet: heme iron, which is from animal sources; and non-heme iron, which is from plant sources. It appears that only the absorption of non-heme iron is affected, so those consuming a well-balanced diet should not be affected. Those who should be concerned are vegetarians, vegans, and those prone to anemia. To reduce the potential effect, wait an hour after a meal before drinking tea.

Chemotherapy Interaction

There is great debate as to whether tea should be consumed by those undergoing chemotherapy. While some studies have shown that drinking tea may alleviate the side effects of chemotherapy, other studies have shown that the polyphenols in tea may lower the effectiveness of certain chemo treatments, particularly with prostate cancer. It is imperative to speak with your doctor regarding whether or not you may consume tea while undergoing your specific chemotherapy treatment.

Kidney Stones

Tea, like other leafy green vegetables, is rich in oxalate, a naturally occurring compound. Since the majority of kidney stones are formed from calcium oxalate, many doctors recommend eliminating tea from the diet. Even though tea leaves are rich in oxalate, the infusion created from the leaves is much lower in oxalate and should not play a significant role in the formation of kidney stones. Here are some additional points to consider before eliminating tea entirely:

- The type of tea will make a difference in the amount of oxalate that is present – black tea contains the most, green tea the least. Switch to drinking a green or oolong tea, an herbal tisane, or black tea in moderation.
- Adding milk to black tea further lowers the amount of oxalate that is absorbed, since the oxalate binds with the calcium in the milk and gets excreted. Please note that this also slightly reduces the absorption of the calcium present in the milk.
- Steep time affects the amount of oxalate that is extracted from the leaves – the longer the steep time, the more oxalate will be extracted.
- Limit or eliminate your consumption of matcha, since this is not an infusion and the leaves are actually consumed.

Caffeine Sensitivity

Caffeine is a stimulant that is effective in providing energy, alertness, mental focus and clarity. However, consuming caffeine can sometimes have negative effects on the body, including: jitteriness; raised blood pressure; rapid heartbeat or fluttering; insomnia; among others.

We will continue to update this section as new research findings become available. If you have a question regarding something you read or heard about the health concerns of tea, please feel free to e-mail Kristine your question at kristine@pleasuresoftea.com.