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**NEW RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT TEA DRINKERS ARE AT REDUCED RISK OF BREAST CANCER**

Cancer is a very complex medical subject but a new systematic review and meta-analysis[[1]](#footnote-1) builds on previous research and shows how tea drinkers could have less of a breast cancer risk. The aim of this latest analysis was to evaluate the links between tea consumption and alcohol drinking and physical activity and breast cancer risk among Chinese women.

Commenting on the new research, Women’s health specialist, Dr Catherine Hood from The Tea Advisory Panel (TAP) notes: “Thirty-nine studies involving 13,204 breast cancer cases and 87,248 controls were identified for the entire study. Among the total number of studies, 16 involved tea consumption with a total of 28,737 cases and 60,936 controls

“Compared with non-drinkers, regular tea drinkers had a 21 per cent decreased risk of breast cancer. This beneficial finding is likely to be associated with the polyphenol content of tea. Tea is rich in polyphenols, including catechins and gallocatchins, which have been reported to have antioxidant activity and potential anti-tumour effect. [[2]](#footnote-2) As a result, this study provides further data on the health benefits of tea, which is the most popular beverage, after water, in the United Kingdom.”

**SOS: More evidence that black tea improves vascular function**

A new study has provided yet further evidence that black tea improves the function of the blood vessels, [[3]](#footnote-3) helping to explain why black tea is associated with reduced cardiovascular risk.

Looking at this research further, Dr Tim Bond from TAP says: “Several previous studies have found that black tea and its flavonoids have direct effects on the blood vessels improving vascular function. The aim of this study was to see if tea improves vascular function by helping to prevent injury of the blood vessels in the face of ischaemia (restriction in blood supply) which is a frequent occurrence in cardiovascular disease.

“This was a randomised, crossover study in which 20 healthy subjects drank three cups of tea each day for 7 days. Tea consumption resulted in an immediate increase in flow-mediated dilation (FMD; a measure of blood vessel function) whilst no such change occurred after drinking of hot water. This finding helps to confirm previous research findings suggesting that improvement in blood vessel function is a key mechanism by which black tea reduces cardiovascular risk.

“The first study to show that black tea improves FMD was conducted in 19 healthy men and was published in 2009. In this study black tea was also evaluated for an influence on blood pressure and arterial stiffness and it provided benefits in both measures.[[4]](#footnote-4) A study published earlier this year also showed that three cups of tea daily can reduce arterial stiffness.[[5]](#footnote-5)

“Overall this latest study showed that the cardioprotective effect of black tea consumption relates to a direct effect of tea on the blood vessels and improved blood flow. It confirms earlier studies showing the same effect and provides further evidence for the heart health benefits of black tea in amounts of at least three cups daily.”

In summary, Dr Catherine Hood notes: “There is far more to the nation’s favourite drink than we realise. These latest studies highlight how tea packs a powerful punch with many health benefits particularly for the heart. And studies also show that tea works its health magic whether or not we choose to add milk. All in all, drinking four or more cups of tea each day is quite simply very good for us as is just as hydrating as water!”

**The Tea Advisory Panel:** The Tea Advisory Panel is supported by an unrestricted educational grant from the **UK TEA COUNCIL**, the trade association for the UK tea industry. The Panel has been created to provide media with impartial information regarding the health benefits of tea. Panel members include nutritionists; dieticians and doctors. For further information please call **0207 7052 8989.**

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5. Li C-H, Yag Y-C, Wu J-S et al. Increased tea consumption is associated with decreased arterial stiffness in a Chinese population. PLOS one January 2014, Issue 1, e86022. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)