

# Examining The Health Benefits Of Different Teas

Tea is a beverage that is presumed to offer all types of health benefits.

Due to its antioxidant properties it is purported to help prevent cancer, reduce hypertension and boost the immune system.

While green tea has been touted as the wonder tea of choice for sev-

eral years, many experts say that drinking any type of tea can provide health benefits.

The types of tea, whether white, green, black, or oolong, vary only in the way they are processed or grown. All tea comes from the same plant: *Camellia sinensis*.

What Determines Type of Tea?

Fermentation, also known as oxidation, or the exposure of tea leaves to oxygen, is what determines its color and classification.

Green tea is made from tea leaves that are not fermented. They may only be withered in hot air and quickly steamed or pan-fried. Black tea is made from leaves that have been fully oxidized for a strict amount of minutes until they turn a dark color.

Oolong tea falls somewhere in between with a semi-oxidation process that produces a reddish color and a flowery taste.

White tea, which has been enjoyed since the Ming Dynasty in China, is a relatively new addition in North America.

As such, many people aren't very familiar with white tea and how it is created.

White tea is made from immature tea leaves on tea bushes where the buds have yet to open.

The tea gets its "white" name from the color of a downy fuzz that covers the unopened buds. Varieties of white tea are made from a certain ratio of tea leaves to buds.

Also, white tea undergoes even less processing than other types of tea. The leaves are often just steamed instead of any oxidation fermentation process being used.

White tea presents a sweet, silky, and what many people say is a

"less grassy" taste than green tea. What Tea is Best?

There are mixed views on the health benefits of different types of tea, and which actually has an advantage over another type.

There is reason to believe that since white tea is as close to the natural state of the plant, and because it contains more polyphenols it would subsequently be better for you.

However, one first has to understand the chemistry behind tea leaf fermentation and the substances in the tea leaves to make a determination.

According to About.com, and Jane Higdon, Ph.D. a LPI Research Associate, fresh tea leaves are rich in polyphenolic compounds known as catechins.

When tea leaves are intentionally broken or rolled during pro-

cessing, catechins become oxidized through the action of polyphenol oxidase enzymes present in the tea leaves.

The oxidation of catechins, known as fermentation in the tea industry, causes them to polymerize and to form larger, more complex polyphenols known as theaflavins and thearubigins. In simple terms, the more tea is processed, catechins go down as theaflavins and thearubigins go up.

Because theaflavins and thearubigins are created from catechins, and all are effective anti-oxidants, many experts say any tea can provide health benefits.

Research is ongoing into the efficacy of tea for optimal health and helping many common conditions. For those who tolerate a moderate amount of caffeine in their daily diet, tea can be an advantage providing moderate health benefits.

## Is Your Child Really Too Sick For School?

Each day, kids put their parents' sleuthing skills to the test when they say they're too sick to go to school. After assessing the symptoms, checking the temperature of foreheads and pulling out the thermometer, Mom or Dad makes the determination if an absence is warranted.

After all, a day home for a youngster often means a day off of work for a parent as well to provide supervision at home. This can lead to lost wages and confrontation with the boss — particularly if absences are frequent.

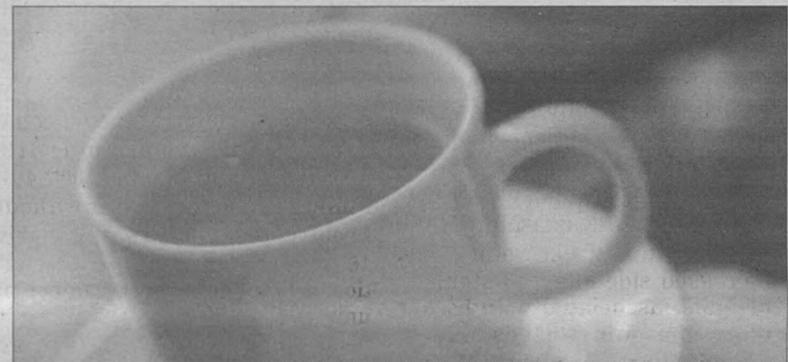
According to the Atlanta Center for Disease Control Handbook for Day Care Centers, there are certain symptoms parents should look for before sending their children to school, which usually indicate real illness:

- Temperature above 101 F in the morning.
- Diarrhea, where more than one abnormally loose stool has occurred in the last 24 hours.
- Vomiting anytime after 6 p.m. the preceding evening.
- Severe coughing where the

child gets red or blue in the face or the child makes a high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after he or she coughs.

- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Pinkeye (conjunctivitis), evidenced by tears, redness of eyelid lining and irritation, followed by swelling and discharge of pus.
- Infected skin patches that are crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy.
- Any contagious disease, like chicken pox, measles, mumps, mono, etc.
- If an antibiotic has been given for an ear infection or sore throat, wait 24 hours before sending a child back to school.
- Severe itching of the body or scalp, which could indicate the presence of lice.
- Severe sore throat or trouble swallowing.
- Constant running nose.

When validated, keeping children home from school when sick prevents the spreading of disease, so that all kids in the class will be healthier and miss fewer school days.



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