



FACTSHEET

GREEN TEA

WHAT IS GREEN TEA?

Green tea is made from the leaves of *Camellia sinensis*. Green and (regular) black tea tend to come from different varieties of the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis*, and differ in how they are processed. The green tea leaves do not go through an oxidising process, so the leaves contain 'non-oxidised phenolic compounds' which are lighter in colour. Green tea has no oxidised phenolic compounds, while black tea has about 25 per cent.

HOW MUCH CAFFEINE IS IN A CUP OF GREEN TEA?

It depends on the steeping time. But when green tea is steeped for the recommended 1-3 minutes it has about 20mg. By comparison black tea has about 55mg, and an average cup of coffee has about 100mg of caffeine (which can go up to 200mg).

HOW MIGHT GREEN TEA HELP REDUCE DEPRESSION?

One of the symptoms of depression is low energy. Whilst the small amount of caffeine in green tea may help give you a wee lift, it is another active ingredient, the amino acid L-theanine, which is responsible for reducing the low energy depression symptoms. Green tea may help to increase the levels of serotonin in your brain, according to an article published in 2009 in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. L-theanine, is an amino acid which can cross the blood-brain barrier and may be able to get the brain to produce more serotonin. Serotonin itself cannot cross the

blood-brain barrier and must be produced in the brain, if it is to be used in the brain.

HOW MANY CUPS OF GREEN TEA SHOULD I DRINK?

A study of the elderly in Japan showed that those who drank four or more cups of green tea a day were considerably less likely to show symptoms of depression. This effect was not seen in drinkers of coffee, black tea or oolong tea. The individuals who reported drinking four or more cups of green tea daily were 44% less likely to show symptoms of depression than those who drank one cup or less daily.

Perhaps experiment by trying 4 cups of green tea... and see how you go. You may find that it doesn't need to be strong to have a positive effect. Don't drink it after 5pm, or the small amount of caffeine may keep you awake. Take one day off per week to further improve its efficacy.

HERE'S A LITTLE GREEN TEA REGIME

Try drinking a strong cup of green tea in the morning: steep the teabag for 10mins, before squeezing it out. Through the day drink an additional 1-4 weak cups of green tea. When the weather is hot make the green tea in advance, and drink it chilled. This little regime of a cup of strong green tea in the morning, and several weak green teas through the day can lessen the severity of depression symptoms. You should notice your mood lightening within a day or two.

I hope you find this factsheet helpful.
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