

Chinese tea, particularly green tea, is good for health

The art of tea tasting is a part of Chinese culture. It's believed tea can improve one's health, refresh one's mind, relieve pain and correct other disorders. Major components of tea include polyphenols, caffeine, flavonoids, vitamin C, vitamin E, carotenoid and small amounts of Zinc, Selenium, Manganese and other minerals that are good for health.

Among these components, tea polyphenols is the most beneficial to health. It contains catechins, which helps to lower cholesterol, prevent atherosclerosis, reduce body fat, suppress the growth of *Helicobacter pylori* and improve a person's memory.

Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), an important element in catechins, is a strong antioxidant that helps to protect cells by eliminating free radicals. Catechins not only helps to contain the growth of bacteria and to reduce inflammation, it also controls hypertension and lowers the level of sugar in a person's blood, thus preventing diabetes from occurring.

Tea can also reduce cholesterol, preventing cardiovascular diseases. It can suppress fatty acid synthesis, thereby reducing fat assimilation. Non-fermented green tea contains the highest amount of Catechins, and is therefore preferable to semi-fermented green tea, or fully fermented black tea.

Several studies conducted by the Department of Pharmacology of HKU Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine on animals showed that Catechins can also prevents colitis, slows the growth of cancer cells as well as ageing. To get the most out of green tea, the leaves should be brewed at a temperature of between 70 and 90°C to retain their nutrients. Drinking 4 to 5 cups of green tea each day is good for health.