

Have you had your  
two to four cups today?

# Hooked on tea

Drinking tea regularly can benefit your health

by Jenny McCuen • photos by James D. Fidler



**T**ea is not just for cold winter nights by the fire or parties with small sandwiches and white gloves. Drinking tea – black, green or oolong – on a regular basis can benefit your health.

“All tea is good for you,” says Mike Feller, co-owner of Gong Fu Tea in the East Village. “It just depends on what attribute you’re looking for.”

Familiar black tea is linked to fighting heart disease. Dr. Alan R. Koslow, owner of Piques Diet and Dessert in Urbandale and a practicing vascular surgeon, says that studies have shown regular consumption of black tea can decrease the hardening of arteries, especially in women.

The caffeine in black tea will also keep you from dozing off at your desk – but unlike the caffeine in coffee, the caffeine in tea won’t leave you tired after a sudden burst of energy.

The caffeine becomes more evenly distributed in your bloodstream and won’t leave you jittery with an increased heart level. Caffeine in high doses has also shown evidence of decreasing the risk of Parkinson’s disease.

## TAKE THE OTHER-TEA PLUNGE

When tea leaves are processed, they are oxidized

to develop more flavor and make the caffeine more soluble in the bloodstream. Green teas are lower in flavor than some other teas – but they are higher in anti-oxidants, which can help lower cholesterol and blood pressure and fight the effects of aging.

Koslow says studies have shown that drinking about three cups of green tea a day may have positive effects on reducing bladder and gastric cancer.

More oxidized than green tea, oolong tea has a bolder flavor and a little more caffeine. Because of its anti-oxidant properties, drinking three to four cups of oolong tea a day can decrease blood pressure.

And oolong tea, along with all other teas, may also help to speed up the metabolism, Feller says.

Most white teas have high anti-oxidant levels because they are not oxi-

dized at all, but they account for only 19 percent of the world’s tea.

Both Feller and Koslow recommend drinking two to four cups of tea a day to achieve the full health benefits of tea. And it’s important to remember that tea alone is not the only way to stay healthy.



▲ Kristyna Solawetz brews an individual cup of tea at Gong Fu Tea.

“You can get the same health benefits just by eating healthy, exercising and maintaining your weight,” says Koslow.

“But I definitely think there are enough benefits to make drinking tea worthwhile. The only downside is staining your teeth.” \*

## HAVE A SPOT OF CAMEL'S BREATH

Most studies of the health benefits of teas have focused on green, oolong and black teas, but other teas also are beneficial.

Gong Fu Tea offers Puerh teas and herbal teas that claim to treat indigestion or prevent menopausal symptoms. Here’s a sampling:

**Camel’s Breath.** May help reduce fat and lower cholesterol, aid in indigestion and fight obesity.

**Organic Ginger Puerh.** May heal with weight loss and lowering cholesterol.

**Honeybush Organic.** May help prevent cancerous tumors and menopausal symptoms.



▲ Drinking tea on a regular basis can help your health. From left: green, oolong and black tea leaves.