

# Tea: the New Anti-Aging Beverage?

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Tea may be more than a trendy coffee alternative, according to researchers at the Douglas Hospital Research Centre (DHRC). Their findings, published in a recent issue of the *European Journal of Neuroscience*, suggest that regular consumption of either black or green tea may reduce the risk of age-related degenerative brain disorders such as Alzheimer disease.

“We looked at the protective effects of two tea extracts and their main constituents, called catechins, on dying nerve cells,” says senior author Rémi Quirion, PhD, Scientific Director of the DHRC and of the Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (CIHR). “Our findings showed that administration of both black and green tea extracts and catechins strongly blocked death of neurons. This is the first study to

show this beneficial effect of both black and green tea.”

Quirion and his colleagues used cultured nerve cells (also called neurons) for this study and exposed them to amyloid, a protein believed to cause Alzheimer disease. This molecule was toxic and caused cell death in the cultures. However cell cultures that received amyloid followed by tea extracts and catechins administration were rescued and survived.

“These findings clearly show a pivotal protective role of catechins in the nervous system,” says Stéphane Bastianetto, a DHRC scientist and lead author. “Although we haven’t conducted human clinical experiments, this research does suggest that a regular consumption of tea, green or black, may reduce the risk of neurodegenerative disease such as Alzheimer’s”.

Source: McGill University

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