



The (Almost) Effortless Daily Habit That Can Lower Cholesterol, Boost Brain Health

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In Brief

- Drinking tea daily can lower LDL cholesterol, support heart health, and may help reduce brain lesions linked to dementia.
- Tea also filters heavy metals from water, offers L-theanine and is more moderate in caffeine than coffee—**read on for the full article.**

Tea is the world's second-most popular beverage after water, and for good reason. More than just a cozy ritual, it's packed with surprising health benefits, from boosting focus and protecting your heart to helping filter impurities from your water. Read on to learn more about how having a daily cup of tea is a simple, science-backed way to care for your body, one sip at a time.

How Tea Filters Heavy Metals

Tea can actually help clean your water. A Northwestern University study [published earlier this year](#) found that tea can help filter contaminants like lead and cadmium from the brewing water. Heavy metal ions stick to the tea leaves' surface, where they're trapped until you remove them. Even a quick five-minute steep reduced lead levels by 15%, and longer brewing increases the effect.

Heart-Health Benefits

A meta-analysis published in *Nutrition Journal* in 2020 found that regularly drinking green tea may significantly lower total cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol. Observational studies also [suggest](#) that people who drink the most green tea have a lower risk of dying from heart disease compared to those who drink the least.

Brain Benefits

All “true teas”—green, white, oolong, and black—contain L-theanine, an amino acid that promotes relaxation without drowsiness, with green tea generally being the best source. These teas also contain moderate amounts of caffeine, which studies have found improves mental focus, attention span, and alertness. And in a [January 2025 study](#), Japanese researchers who looked at brain imaging of older adults who drank green tea and coffee found that the tea drinkers had fewer brain lesions linked to dementia.

Naturally Half-Caf

The watchword with caffeine is moderation, and that's where tea shines. One 8-ounce cup of black tea contains about 48 milligrams of caffeine compared with 95 milligrams in an equal amount of black coffee. Oolong and green tea have 38 and 29 milligrams, respectively. If you're very caffeine sensitive, opt for decaf or herbal teas.

Hot Tea Has a Cooling Effect

Hot tea is warmer than your body temperature, but drinking it can cool you down on a hot day. Researchers at the University of Ottawa's Thermal Ergonomics Lab [found](#) that drinking hot water triggers perspiration. As long as you're wearing clothes that allow the sweat to evaporate and it's not too humid out, your core body temp will decline.

Do You Need to Worry About Plastic in Tea Bags?

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In 2019, a [McGill University study](#) found that brewing a single plastic tea bag released 11.6 billion microplastic and 3.1 billion nanoplastic particles into the brewing water. Don't let headlines scare you off tea; most tea bags are made from natural materials, but some do contain polypropylene, which will be listed on the package. Instead look for packaging labeled "free of plastic," "compostable," or "plant-based." Or steep loose leaf tea in a reusable stainless steel, glass, or ceramic infuser or tea ball.