

White tea could keep you healthy and looking young


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Next time you're making a cuppa, new research shows it might be wise to opt for a white tea if you want to reduce your risk of cancer, rheumatoid arthritis or even just age-associated wrinkles. Researchers from Kingston University teamed up with Neal's Yard Remedies to test the health properties of 21 plant and herb extracts. They discovered all of the plants tested had some potential benefits, but were intrigued to find white tea considerably outperformed all of them.

Professor Declan Naughton, from the School of Life Sciences at Kingston University in South West London, said the research showed white tea had anti-ageing potential and high levels of anti-oxidants which could prevent cancer and heart disease. "We've carried out tests to identify plant extracts that protected the structural proteins of the skin, specifically elastin and collagen," he explained. "Elastin supports the body's natural elasticity which helps lungs, arteries, ligaments and skin to function. It also helps body tissue to repair when you suffer wounds and stops skin from sagging." Collagen is a protein found in connective tissues in the body and is important for [skin](#), strength and elasticity, he added.



Results showed white tea prevented the activities of the enzymes which breakdown elastin and collagen which can lead to wrinkles that accompany ageing. These enzymes, along with oxidants, are associated with inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis. Professor Naughton said: "These enzymes and oxidants are key components of normal body processes. However, in inflammatory conditions, suppressing the activities of these excess components has been the subject of decades of research. We were surprised to find such high activity for the white tea extracts in all five tests that were conducted."

The researchers were blown away by exactly how well the white tea had performed. "We were testing very small amounts far less than you would find in a drink," Professor Naughton, one of the country's leading specialists on inflammation, said. "The early indicators are that white tea reduces the risk of inflammation which is characteristic of rheumatoid arthritis and some cancers as well as wrinkles."