

Tea Time

By Charlene Phillips

Tea was discovered by accident nearly 5,000 years ago by Chinese Emperor Shen Nung. Today it is recognized as a healthy beverage by people everywhere. Worldwide, it is the most widely consumed beverage, next to water! On any given day, over 127 million Americans drink tea. It is an all natural product that contains no sodium, no fat, carbonation or sugar, and unsweetened tea is virtually calorie free. For Americans trying to maintain a healthy life-style tea is the ideal "healthy" beverage.

The recently published *Healthy Beverage Guidelines* created by a panel of leading American nutritional experts, ranked unsweetened tea second to water in health benefits. They recommend tea because beverages account for 20% of total calories in the average American diet. This is twice as many liquid calories as nutrition experts recommend. They say no more than 10 to 15% of the daily calorie intake should be consumed in beverages. Barry M. Popkin, PhD, of the University of North Carolina, says "everybody -- parents, adults, and teenagers should realize what they drink is adding to their weight. We want people to think about their entire portfolio of beverages and change them to make for a healthier America."

The guidelines suggest that women consume up to nine servings of water a day and men consume thirteen. They recommend drinking water first because it has the ability to hydrate without adding calories. Unsweetened tea was again second on the chart with a recommended eight servings per day. It was also noted that drinking three or more servings of tea may decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Another benefit: Tea provides amino acids, primarily theanine, which has been shown to enhance the body's ability to resist infections. In September, 2007 John Foxe, a neuroscience professor at City College of NY, reported new findings about theanine at the International Symposium on Tea and Human Health. According to Foxe, clinical trials revealed

THE DAILY HEALTHY BEVERAGE GUIDELINES

Proposed by a panel of nutritional experts
YOU ARE WHAT YOU DRINK

The proposed Healthy Beverage Guidelines were created by a panel of nutrition experts to help Americans make smart beverage choices. According to these proposed Guidelines, women should drink 7-9 servings of beverages each day and men should drink 13. To make the most of your daily beverage allowance, choose beverages from the different levels in the pyramid. Remember that beverages should not make up more than 10-15 percent of your total daily calories and that you should limit caffeine consumption to 400 milligrams per day. Contrary to popular belief, studies prove that caffeine consumption in moderation is NOT dehydrating. Based on the proposed Guidelines, you should choose most of your beverages from the bottom levels of the pyramid and consume the beverages in the upper levels in moderation. Each beverage is ranked from bottom to top by its average calories, nutrient content and potential health benefits.



Contact: Pollock Communications 212-941-1414/ Tea Council of the USA, 212-986-6998

that as little as 100 milligrams of theanine enabled people to focus better on complicated tasks when consumed with 60 milligrams of caffeine. This is equal to drinking about three cups of green tea. And the list goes on. In more recent studies scientists have reported that black, green and oolong teas provide flavonoids, antioxidants, and micronutrients such as fluoride. So tea can even help clean your teeth!

In conclusion, the "Healthy Beverage Guidelines" chart highlights the importance of thinking before you drink! Remember the saying, "you are what you eat?" Today, evidence also shows "you are what you drink." So listen to the experts, drink up, and choose the right stuff!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlene Phillips is the founder of the Rochester company Tealightful Treasures, a national home party company featuring teas and associated products. Visit their website, www.tealightfultreasures.com, to get more great ideas on making tea a part of your life.