



Milk and Tea Don't Mix

Research Update

You may have heard by now that tea is healthy for you. Black, green and white teas, in particular, are rich in antioxidants that are good for your heart and may protect against cancer. Tea also helps to improve blood vessel relaxation and contraction, lower cholesterol, restore arterial function after a heart attack, make the blood less “sticky” to help prevent heart attacks and strokes, and neutralize cancer-causing free radicals. Tea’s cardio-protective quality is largely due to its high levels of catechins, a type of polyphenol that is also found in wine.

However, the salutary effect of tea is lost if you add milk to it, as the British tend to do. Japanese populations who drink about six cups of green tea a day (without milk) enjoy very low rates of heart disease and cancer, while British populations, who also drink a lot of tea but typically add milk, have higher rates of heart disease and cancer. A recent study published in the *European Heart Journal* looks at the effect of adding milk to black tea and found that the addition of milk completely blunted the heart benefits of the tea. They suspect that the protein in the milk binds to the catechins and prevents them from working their magic on vessels and arteries.

Though this study only looked at black tea, which contains lower amounts of catechins than green tea, it would be safe to assume that the same result would occur from a green tea and milk combination. It is also unclear whether any type of protein (such as soy protein in soy milk) would bind to the catechins or if it’s just milk protein that has the undesirable effect. If you drink tea or would like to start drinking it, I recommend a green or white tea (but hold the milk!).

DASH to Lower Blood Pressure



Do you know what your blood pressure is? If you don’t, then you should know that you have a 30% chance of having hypertension (high blood pressure) and a similar chance of having pre-hypertension (which means you’re on your way to having high blood pressure).

High blood pressure is dubbed the “silent killer” because you can’t “feel” it—not even if you have severely high blood pressure. Unbeknownst to you, this sneaky condition could be hard at work making your heart work harder, hardening your arteries, damaging your kidneys and possibly even causing your brain to hemorrhage. Hypertension increases the likelihood of having a stroke or heart attack, heart failure, kidney disease and even blindness. Blood pressure that is merely elevated increases the risk of having a heart attack or developing cardiovascular disease (hypertension is the most common form of cardiovascular disease). If you have a pre-existing condition, such as diabetes or high cholesterol, or are overweight or drink more than two alcoholic beverages a day, then you

have a much higher risk of developing hypertension.

Are you curious to know if you’re at risk now? The only way to know your numbers is to have your pressure tested by a doctor or nurse. An optimal reading is below 120/80 mmHg. Check the box below to see where your reading falls. To determine your category, go with the number that fits into the higher category. For instance, if your reading is 139/80, then you are in the high-normal category. A reading in the normal or high-normal category is considered pre-hypertensive.

Blood Pressure Reading Categories

- Optimal: below 120/80
- Normal: between 120-129/80-84
- High-normal: between 130-139/85-89
- Hypertension: above 140/90

A reading that is greater than 120/80 is a sign that you need to make some lifestyle changes immediately. Hypertension can be controlled

continued...

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DASH to Lower Blood Pressure continued...

with diet and lifestyle modifications and, in some cases, with medication. However, medication is a last resort and should only be used to treat hypertension, not pre-hypertension. A reading below 120/80 doesn't mean you shouldn't continue reading this article, though. Blood pressure increases with age and, though we can't stop aging, we can take measures to prevent our blood pressure from creeping upwards.

If your blood pressure is above the optimal range, or if it is optimal and you want it to stay that way, here's what you need to do:

- **Lose weight if you're overweight or weigh more than you used to.** Carrying extra weight raises your blood pressure and losing even a little bit of that weight will help to lower it. The more weight you lose and keep off, the more you will reduce your blood pressure.
- **Get physically active — even 30 minutes of moderate activity each day can do the trick.** In early 2006, the American Heart Association revised its lifestyle recommendations for lowering blood pressure. Weight loss achieved with the aid of a high level of physical activity is now its number one recommendation. Aside from lowering blood pressure, exercise is a crucial part of weight loss and maintenance. Regular exercise is important for everyone, not just people with elevated blood pressure, since it helps to prevent blood pressure from rising.
- **Stop smoking if you still smoke.** Smoking not only raises your blood pressure, it also increases your risks for other cardiovascular diseases and strokes.
- **Take up a relaxation technique.** Breathing exercises, meditation, yoga (which is also exercise) and biofeedback are all effective ways to let go of some stress and lower your blood pressure. Stress is associated with elevated blood pressure and recent studies have shown that relaxation techniques can mitigate some stress and, therefore, lower blood pressure.
- **Discontinue or minimize the use of caffeine, which is associated with a short term rise in blood pressure (especially if it is consumed irregularly).** Coffee, tea, soda and energy drinks do not cause high blood pressure, per se, but they may temporarily raise blood pressure in people who drink it infrequently. If you do use caffeine, try to drink a small amount of green tea or drip coffee daily.
- **Drink 5 ounces of wine or 12 ounces of beer daily to reap the blood pressure-lowering benefits of alcohol.** That's right, moderate alcohol consumption is advised. Although excess

alcohol increases blood pressure, moderate drinking—one to two glasses of alcohol a day—can actually be protective for individuals with high blood pressure. Hypertensive men who drink regularly and moderately have a lower risk of having a heart attack than men who don't drink or drink three or more alcoholic beverages a day.

- **Cut your sodium intake down to no more than 1,500 milligrams a day.** Avoid salty foods such as processed foods, lunch meats and cured meats, frozen prepared foods, canned foods and foods that are prepared in most restaurants. When you do buy processed and packaged food, read the Nutrition Facts on the food labels and compare labels on similar products to help yourself make the best choice. When using canned foods, lower the sodium content further by rinsing and draining them first. Learn to use fresh herbs, dried salt-free spices, pepper and lemon juice instead of salt when cooking. Your food will taste a little bland for about three weeks because that's how long it takes for your taste buds to turn over, but after that, your new taste buds will help you taste the varied and subtle flavors in your food. Please be patient with the new flavor profile of your food; you will be rewarded. Lowering salt intake not only lowers blood pressure, it also reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke death and coronary death. Researchers are finding that 1,500 milligrams is an optimal upper limit for yielding the best blood pressure lowering results. Individuals older than 70 should have an upper limit of 1,200 milligrams of sodium a day.
- **Follow the DASH Diet eating plan to really help shake down your blood pressure.** The DASH Diet is proven to help people reach their goals because it is full of specific types of foods that help to lower blood pressure. If followed closely, it can also help you reach your weight goals. All of the components of the diet are important, but the two that carry the most weight (no pun intended) are the serving recommendations for produce and nonfat and low-fat dairy products. These two types of foods contain the minerals potassium, calcium and magnesium, while also being naturally low in sodium. The American Heart Association advises eating eight to ten servings of fruits and vegetables daily as part of the DASH Diet in order to maximize potassium intake. ALL produce contains potassium, not just bananas, so make sure that you eat a variety of fruit and vegetables each day. Two to three servings of nonfat milk and yogurt, as well as low-fat cheese, are recommended because they are rich sources of calcium and magnesium.



Our registered dietitian has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are general in nature and not tailored to specific health problems. Talk to your physician or other qualified health care practitioners concerning particular health issues or before beginning any nutritional program.

Here are the DASH Diet general eating guidelines:

Food Group	Daily Servings for a 2,000 calorie diet	Daily Servings for a 1,600 calorie diet	Serving Size Examples
Whole Grains	7-8	5	1 slice whole-grain bread, 1/2 cup cooked brown rice, barley, quinoa, whole-wheat pasta or oats, 1 ounce (28g) whole-grain dry cereal
Vegetables	4-5	3-4	1 cup raw leafy greens, 1/2 cup whole, chopped, or cooked vegetables, 6 ounces low-sodium vegetable juice
Fruits	4-5	4	1 medium whole fruit, 1/2 cup cut, cooked, or canned fruit, 4 ounces fruit juice, 1/4 cup dried fruit
Low-fat and Nonfat dairy products	2-3	2-3	8 ounces nonfat milk, 1 cup nonfat yogurt, 1 1/2 ounces low-fat cheese
Fish, poultry, and meats	2 or less	1.5 or less	3 ounces cooked salmon or other fish, skinless chicken or turkey breast, lean beef sirloin, round, flank or filet, 3 eggs or 6 egg whites
Nuts, seeds, and dry beans	4-5 per week	4-5 per week	1/3 cup or 1 1/2 ounces unsalted walnuts, almonds, pecans or cashews, 1/2 cup cooked dry lentil, kidney, soy or other beans (drained and rinsed) 2 tablespoons sunflower or other seeds, 2 tablespoons nut butter
Fats and oils	2-3	2	1 teaspoon olive oil, canola oil or butter, 1 tablespoon salad dressing or low-fat mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons low-fat salad dressing
Sweets	5 per week	1 per week	1 tablespoon sugar, syrup, jam, 1/2 ounce dark chocolate or hard candy, 8 ounces lemonade or fruit punch, 1/2 cup sorbet

This eating plan is intended to be a lifestyle, not a diet. It is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products, moderate in protein, low in total fat, trans fat, saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber. The guidelines I have given you are based on 2,000 and 1,600 calorie diets, but you can adjust the grain, vegetable, fruit, and fat servings up for more calories or down for fewer calories depending on your calorie needs. Notice that alcohol is not included in the calorie counts in the eating guidelines. Figure that a 5-ounce glass of red or white wine has 100 calories, 12 ounces of light beer has 110 calories and 12 ounces of regular beer has 150 calories. If you do decide to include alcohol in your eating plan, you will need to add a few more minutes of exercise or cut out one serving of whole grains or sweets to account for the extra calories. Use

my DASH Diet Daily Record Worksheet to help you figure out how closely you are adhering to the DASH diet. Make sure your meals are balanced with whole grains, protein, and vegetables or fruit so you don't get hungry and your blood sugar stays steady throughout the day.

This month is both Heart Month and Women's Health Month. Since heart disease is the number one killer of both women and men, February is the perfect time to begin taking better care of your heart, starting with managing your blood pressure. If you want to stay healthy, lower your disease risk and live longer, then you have to know your risk factors. Even if hypertension is not an issue for you, keep in mind that this eating plan is not just for lowering blood pressure, it's also just plain healthy.

Food of the Month

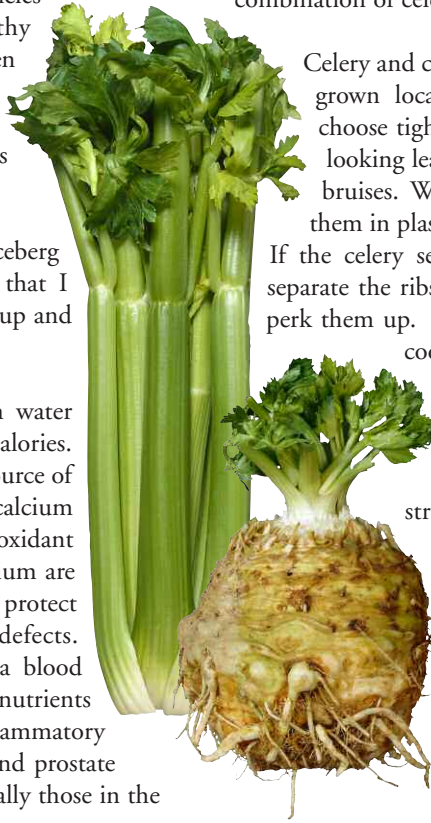
Celery

for various reasons. This month we will begin with celery, a distinctive vegetable that is often dismissed as nutrient poor.

Most people think that celery is about as nutritious as iceberg lettuce, which is not saying much. I have to admit that I thought it was, too, until I had a delicious celery root soup and decided to do a little research...

It turns out that like iceberg, celery does have a high water content, but that just means that it's very low in calories. Surprisingly, it's nutritious, too. Celery is an excellent source of vitamin K, which is important for blood clotting and calcium absorption. It's also a good source of vitamin C, an antioxidant that helps boost the immune system. Folate and potassium are present, as well. Folate acts as an anti-inflammatory to protect against heart attacks and it helps prevent birth defects. Potassium, as you may know, is an essential part of a blood pressure-lowering diet. There are also two unusual phytonutrients in celery: quercetin and apigenin. Quercetin has anti-inflammatory and anti-allergy properties and it helps promote brain and prostate health. Apigenin may help inhibit tumor growth, especially those in the

This is part one in a new Food of the Month series on "produce outcasts." In the coming months this newsletter will have a succession of articles that feature a healthy produce item that is often maligned or overlooked



prostate. As for the calories, there are only six per rib—a nutritional bargain!

You may not be familiar with celery root (also called celeriac). It is the root of the celery but it is grown solely for the use of the root. It is about the size of a large potato and it is gnarled, hairy and ugly in appearance. It does have some wonderful flavor to offer, though. It tastes like a combination of celery and parsley.

Celery and celery root are always in season and they are usually grown locally in California. When shopping for celery, choose tight bunches of light green glossy ribs with healthy-looking leaves. Look for roots that are free of soft spots and bruises. When you bring your celery and celeriac home, store them in plastic bags in the crisper drawer for up to two weeks.

If the celery seems wilted towards the end of its storage life, separate the ribs and submerge them briefly in ice water to help perk them up. Wash the items just before you're ready to eat or cook with them. Celery root must be scrubbed and peeled. Both items can be eaten raw or cooked.

When eaten raw, the inner ribs of the celery tend to be more tender, but you can always peel the outer ribs with a vegetable peeler if they are too stringy. Raw celery makes a great crunchy snack, especially when paired with a little almond butter (which has a healthier fat profile than peanut butter). You can also dip it into cottage cheese or some seasoned unsweetened yogurt. Raw celeriac can be shaved or julienned for salads. My favorite use for celery and its root is in soups, where it sautés beautifully with onions, leeks and carrots as a base. This month, try my recipe for Celeriac Potato Leek Soup.

Jessica's February Store Appearances: Body Fat Testing*

Jessica will be offering complimentary body fat testing and answering your questions about weight loss, food and nutrition.

Valley Village/North Hollywood
Monday February 12, Noon

Century City
Tuesday February 20, Noon

Encino
Friday February 23, Noon

Marina del Rey
Monday February 26, 5:00 pm

Mayfair Hollywood
Tuesday February 27, 5:00 pm

*Testing method is Bioelectrical Impedance and is not appropriate for people with pacemakers or osteoporosis, pregnant women or children. Be well-hydrated for most accurate results.

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