

## Can tea be too hot?



A piping hot cup of tea is a morning staple for millions of people across the globe. But can tea be so hot as to adversely affect tea drinkers' overall health? A 2019 study from researchers with the American Cancer Society found a link between drinking hot tea and esophageal cancer. The study, published in the *International Journal of Cancer*, examined more than 50,000 people between the ages of 40 and 75 in the Iranian province of Golestan for an average of 10 years. Researchers determined that tea drinkers who consumed their tea at temperatures higher than 140 F (60 C) and consumed about two large cups per day had a 90 percent higher risk of esophageal cancer compared to people who consumed less tea at cooler temperatures. The authors of the study acknowledged more research is necessary to determine exactly why hot tea is linked with a higher risk of esophageal cancer. But scientists responding to the study suspect it's the temperature and not the tea that's causing the elevated risk for cancer. "This is valuable research but not a ground-breaking discovery," Dr. James Doidge, Senior Research Associate, University College London, told the Science Media Centre. "Hot drinks are an established risk factor for oesophageal cancer and it doesn't take a scientist to appreciate that repeated irritation of any body surface increases your risk of cancer."

So should hot tea be avoided? It seems the answer is yes if the tea is 140 F or higher. But that same rule should be applied to any hot beverage, not just tea.

"Tea is the only drink consumed in the area (where the study was conducted), so the data relate to this beverage," Stephen Evans, a professor of pharmacoepidemiology at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, told the Science Media Centre. "It is also true that in this area of Iran, that tea is frequently drunk at high temperatures. They did not study any other drink, but other studies have, and it seems that it is the heat that is the issue rather than the actual beverage." Simply waiting until the tea cools down or adding a cooling agent like milk to make the tea cool down instantly can help people indulge their love of tea without necessarily increasing their risk for esophageal cancer.

## Did you know?



When feeling stressed, people may want to reach for a cup of tea. Research conducted by psychologists at the City University London found that a cup of tea reduces stress, not just by drinking it, but also because of the calming effect of putting the tea kettle on. Furthermore, decaffeinated green tea also can calm a person and encourage sleep. In a 2017 study published in the journal *Nutrients*, participants were able to fall asleep much more easily when drinking decaffeinated green tea. Also, they reported feeling much less stressed out over the course of the one-week experiment. Even black tea has been found to relieve stress by lowering cortisol levels when a person is faced with stressful situations. According to the herbal remedy site [Herbwisdom.com](http://Herbwisdom.com), chamomile tea is an age-old medicinal herb that has been used as a remedy for numerous conditions, including asthma, nervousness, sleep, and stomach ailments and as a treatment for colds. It, too, may help reduce stress. Tea has many benefits for the body, and helping to tame stress may be one of them.