

THE BENEFICIAL EFFECT OF GREEN TEA POLYPHENOLS ON HUMAN HEALTH

Summary

Green tea is a beverage made from the leaves of *Camellia sinensis* plant. It is the most popular, next to water, consumed liquid in the world. Due to the health promoting effect of green tea, attributed mainly to the high content of polyphenols (20-40 percent in dry mass), its consumption contributes about 20 percent to the world tea's consumption. The chemical composition of green tea and the fresh leaves is similar and consists of four kinds of basic polyphenols: epicatechin-3-gallate, epigallocatechin and epigallocatechin-3-gallate. In addition, there are present caffeine, theobromine and theophylline; also trace amounts of amino ac-

ids, minerals, carbohydrates, lipids and vitamins can be found. Tea polyphenols are bioavailable in the systemic circulation after administration of green tea as a beverage or as an oral product. The regular consumption of green tea as the beverage may lead to health benefits including antioxidant action, prevention of cancer, and antibacterial, antiviral as well as antiinflammatory effects. Moreover, green tea catechins, at least at high doses, may help to retain proper body weight. To sum up, the green tea seems to have a number of beneficial effects on the human health..