

Green Tea Supplement May Delay Diabetes Rats' Fat Metabolism Improves with Tegreen Treatment

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April 16, 2003 -- An herbal supplement made from green tea leaves might help fight diabetes.

The finding comes from researchers at supplement manufacturer Pharmanex. Hong Zu and colleagues overfed rats until their metabolism started to go haywire. When this happens to obese humans it's called metabolic syndrome X or insulin resistance..

A major feature of metabolic syndrome X is that the body starts losing control of blood sugar levels. In an effort to help, the pancreas makes more insulin. But the body becomes more and more resistant to insulin. Eventually, the whole system breaks down and diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol result.

Can green tea help? Pharmanex makes a green tea supplement called Tegreen. Zu's team gave the fat rats daily doses of Tegreen for eight weeks. Compared with rats that got no treatment, the Tegreen-taking rats lost abdominal fat. More importantly, they had lower levels of sugar, fat, and insulin in their blood.

"Oral administration of Tegreen is capable of improving glucose and lipid metabolisms induced by a high-calorie diet in an obese rat model," Zu and colleagues note in a news release. "This study clearly shows that Tegreen intervention can significantly decrease visceral fat depot and increase insulin sensitivity, presumably touching one of the pathological root causes of the potentially deadly syndrome."

Zu colleague Jia-Shi Zhu reported the findings at this week's meeting of the American Physiological Society.

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