



Green Tea Boosts Antibiotics for Superbugs

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MONDAY, March 31 (HealthDay News) -- Green tea can help antibiotics be three times more effective in fighting drug-resistant bacteria, even superbugs, according to a study by researchers at Alexandria University in Egypt.

Green tea is common in Egypt, and it's likely that many people there drink it while taking antibiotics. Therefore, the researchers wanted to determine if green tea would decrease or increase the effectiveness of antibiotics or have no effect.

"We tested green tea in combination with antibiotics against 28 disease-causing microorganisms belonging to two different classes," Dr Mervat Kaseem, of the university's pharmacy faculty, said in a prepared statement. "In every single case, green tea enhanced the bacteria-killing activity of the antibiotics. For example, the killing effect of chloramphenicol was 99.99 percent better when taken with green tea than when taken on its own in some circumstances."

Kaseem and colleagues also found that green tea made 20 percent of drug-resistant bacteria susceptible to cephalosporin antibiotics, an important type of antibiotics to which new drug-resistant strains of bacteria have evolved resistance.

In almost every case and for all types of antibiotics they tested, the researchers found that drinking green tea at the same time as taking the antibiotics appeared to increase the action of the antibiotics and reduce drug resistance in bacteria. In certain cases, even low concentrations of green tea were effective.

The study was to be presented Monday at a meeting of the Society for General Microbiology in Edinburgh, Scotland.

"Our results show that we should consider more seriously the natural products we consume in our everyday life," Kaseem said. "In the future, we will be looking at other natural herb products such as marjoram and thyme to see whether they also contain active compounds which can help in the battle against drug resistant bacteria."

More information

The U.S. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine has more about green tea.

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