

BY DANIELLE BEAUDETTE

It's a New Year and time to reboot our health regimen. We need to reflect on what we did this past year to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and perhaps what we need to work on more. We suggest including tea as a main ingredient in your diet for many reasons.

To help prevent weight gain, drink 4-5 cups of tea daily. A *Kobe University Study* published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* found that mice given a high fat diet along with regular amounts of both green and black tea suppressed body weight gain and the build-up of belly fat. This study also showed that black tea, the most widely consumed in this country, had the most favorable effects on high blood cholesterol and insulin resistance, conditions associated as precursors to type-2 diabetes.

Experts hope to confirm these findings in human studies.

This is great news for tea. However, it should not give us the freedom to eat high fat foods. Keep in mind that as good as tea is for you, it will not help you lose weight on its own. Eating a breakfast high in carbohydrates and sugary cereals can cause weight gain. We need to hold ourselves accountable for the foods we put into our bodies. One of the easiest steps we can take is to start the day with a healthy breakfast high in protein, complex carbohydrates and fruits—for example, an egg white omelet with fresh herbs, along with a grapefruit. A delicious rich cup of whole-leaf black tea will round out this meal perfectly and will help kick start your day with high energy. It may take a month or two to wean yourself off sugary carbs, but your body and your waistline will thank you!

I can't finish this article without mentioning the other obvious benefit to a healthier lifestyle—exercise. If you are trying to lose excess fat quickly, it is important to maintain an exercise regimen that involves strength training. Muscle burns more calories than fat. According to Rocco Boulay, Exercise Physiologist and owner and creator of Integrity and the *EZ Coach Fitness Programs*, the benefits of strength training include: stronger bones; increased metabolic rate, promoting fat loss; decreased insulin resistance; toned muscles; increased energy; and improved immune function, in addition to many other health



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benefits. When finishing your workout program, reach for a beneficial beverage such as a high protein, low carb drink or a healthy cup of freshly brewed whole leaf iced tea. Skip the bottled stuff. "Most commercially bottled teas contain fewer antioxidant polyphenols (less than 45mg) than home-steeped varieties (50-150 mg)" according to preliminary findings presented at a meeting of the American Chemical Society. (Better Home and Gardens, December 2010, pg. 250) A *study* published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that older women who drank tea had higher bone mineral density (BMD) measurements than women who did not drink tea. For more information on preliminary research about the effects of tea on obesity, visit the *Tea Association of the USA*. (Information in this article is intended for informational purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice.)

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