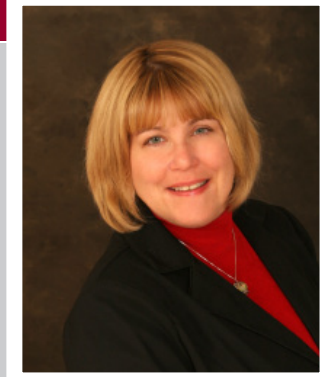


BY DANIELLE BEAUDETTE



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We all enjoy drinking whole leaf teas for their natural health benefits and delicious taste. But tea isn't just for enjoying as a beverage. Many fine chefs around the world are cooking with tea to promote healthy eating, and quality skin care companies are promoting tea as one of the key ingredients in their skin care products. Tea is loaded with a variety of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. So it's only natural that we would find companies promoting the use of tea extract or tea seed oil with other healthy and natural ingredients to beautify the skin.

Free radicals are all around us in the air and can also come from UV rays. If absorbed into our bodies and left alone, these free radicals can replicate and may lead to cancer causing cells and signs of aging. EGCG, the strongest antioxidant in tea, has shown to strengthen the skin cells, act as an antibacterial agent to aid in clearing acne, reduce inflammation and puffiness, and aid in fighting the free radical cells in our bodies without harming healthy tissue.

All types of tea contain antioxidants and EGCG which can be calming and soothing to the skin. The different types of tea can benefit your skin in different ways. In addition to fighting off the free radicals, green tea may aid in eliminating wrinkles and reducing skin discoloration. And white tea, while also helping to fight off the free radicals, assists in restoring health to the skin cells by penetrating deeper into the skin. The best skin care

products will use extracts from both of these teas along with other quality ingredients.

When choosing your skin care product it is important to understand the ingredient list. The ingredients are written with the most used ingredient listed first, and the least used ingredient listed last. Make sure the organic tea extract or organic tea seed oil is listed high on the list and comes from *Camellia sinensis* or *Camellia oleifera*. You want to look for products that are truly simple, natural, and safe. Since the tea cannot get into the skin on its own, the product should also contain 'carrier' ingredients such as organic botanicals, organic herbal extracts and organic essential oils. You also want to look for products that do not test on animals.

It would not be beneficial if the tea was blended with unnatural ingredients. Harsh chemicals, fragrances, toxins or preservatives would counteract the positive effects of the tea, e.g. parabens or propylene glycol. Other harmful ingredients that you want to avoid are phthalate, urea, and SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate).

Your skin is a live organ and will



age as all organs do. The sooner you start using healthy skin care products containing tea, the quicker you will be able to slow the aging process.

Begin as early as your teen years to protect yourself from the sun's rays, and also avoid smoking. If you are already seeing wrinkles and skin discoloration, the damage may already be done. Use your natural skin products containing tea under your sunscreen for double protection from the sun's rays. To keep your body healthy both inside and outside, drink plenty of water, eat a nutritious diet rich in whole foods and omega-3's, drink at least 4 cups of tea per day, and maintain a good skin care regimen that incorporates products containing organic tea seed oil from *Camellia oleifera* and organic green and white tea extracts from *Camellia sinensis*.

Danielle Beaudette is the owner of The Cozy Tea Cart in Brookline, NH. One of 23 Certified Tea Specialists in the country, she continues to broaden her knowledge on tea through on-going studies with the Specialty Tea Institute, the World Tea Expo, and her travels to tea countries around the world. For more information call 603-249-9111 or visit her website at www.TheCozyTeaCart.com.

