Tea Cells

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Raise your pinkie and haul out Granny's china: Tea might cure AIDS. Just kidding—but a new study by Jack Bukowski, MD, of Harvard med school, showed that when tea-drinkers tossed back five cups a day for two weeks, their immune systems made five times more interferon—a disease-fighting protein—than normal.

Any tea made from real tea leaves—black, green, oolong, pekoe (but not herb tea or coffee)—jump-starts the immune system's gamma-delta T cells (they produce that interferon). A different cup of Ts, these white blood cells make up the front line of immune defense, screening out puny infections or weakening nasty viruses. But will it work for HIVers, whose immune defenses can be flatter than yesterday's seltzer? "As far as I can tell, there's no downside to drinking tea," Bukowski says. (If caffeine makes you wiggy, try decaf.) Other studies have revealed tea's antioxidant powers—it could help zap early cancers.

Hike up your tea total and cool off with an easy iced brew from HIVer Scott Williams, 35, of Malvern, Arizona. "I grew up on iced tea," he says. "We weren't fancy…Lipton with plenty of white sugar."

Iced Tea

1. Add 1 tea bag (jasmine or your own favorite) for every 2 cups of fresh water in a 1 to 1 1/2 gallon jar or pitcher.
2. Let it steep overnight in the fridge.
3. Add ice, fresh mint and sugar ("not artificial sweetener!") to taste before serving.

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