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Volume 52, Issue 6, Pages 1049-1059 (June 2005)

[◀ previous](#)

22 of 70

[next ▶](#)

Green tea and the skin


[Stephen Hsu, PhD](#)  

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Plant extracts have been widely used as topical applications for wound-healing, anti-aging, and disease treatments. Examples of these include ginkgo biloba, echinacea, ginseng, grape seed, green tea, lemon, lavender, rosemary, thuja, sarsaparilla, soy, prickly pear, sagebrush, jojoba, aloe vera, allantoin, feverwort, bloodroot, apache plume, and papaya. These plants share a common character: they all produce flavonoid compounds with phenolic structures. These phytochemicals are highly reactive with other compounds, such as reactive oxygen species and biologic macromolecules, to neutralize free radicals or initiate biological effects. A short list of phenolic phytochemicals with promising properties to benefit human health includes a group of polyphenol compounds, called catechins, found in green tea. This article summarizes the findings of studies using green tea polyphenols as chemopreventive, natural healing, and anti-aging agents for human skin, and discusses possible mechanisms of action.

From the Department of Oral Biology and Maxillofacial Pathology, School of Dentistry, Medical College of Georgia

 Reprint requests: Stephen Hsu, PhD, AD1443 School of Dentistry, Medical College of Georgia, Augusta, GA 30912-1126.

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