Does Milk in Tea Reduce Antioxidants?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Does milk reduce tea's antioxidants? In short:** milk proteins can bind some of tea's polyphenols, and studies are mixed on whether that blunts the effect. The practical upshot is small, so drink your tea the way you enjoy it.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026.

It is a fair question with a reassuring answer. Milk can bind to some of the antioxidant compounds in tea, but the research is mixed and the difference in real life is minor. Your splash of milk is not cancelling out your cup.

What actually happens

Polyphenols in tea can attach to the proteins in milk, the caseins. Some studies suggest this reduces how many are available to the body; others find little meaningful change. As things stand, the effect is real but small and not settled. See Wikipedia: green tea and Wikipedia: tea.

The practical takeaway

If antioxidants are what you drink tea for, green and white teas are normally taken without milk anyway. For everyday black tea, the modest effect of milk is not worth worrying about, the benefits of tea are modest to begin with, and enjoyment matters more than chasing a marginal number.

FAQ

Does milk ruin tea's health benefits? No; it may slightly reduce how much antioxidant is available, but the effect is small and uncertain.

Should I drink my tea black to keep the antioxidants? Only if you prefer it; green and white teas are naturally milk-free.

Does it matter for hydration? No, milky tea still hydrates.

This is general information, not medical advice.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Drink it how you like it. A cup you enjoy beats a "correct" cup you don't.

Sources

- Wikipedia: tea
- Wikipedia: green tea

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