

Can Old Tea Make You Sick?

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Can old tea make you sick, in summary: Dry old tea will not make you sick, only bore you. Damp or mouldy tea can, and goes in the bin. Manage moisture and the danger disappears.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/>*
"Can old tea make you sick" deserves a calm, clear answer that neither scares nor falsely reassures. This sits beside [can you drink old tea](#) and [does tea go off](#).

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

Old and dry: no

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Old and dry: no, Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/>*

Tea that is simply past its date but has stayed properly dry will not make you sick. It is dried plant matter; without moisture there is nothing for harmful organisms to grow on. You may be underwhelmed by a flat, aromaless cup, but that is not illness, just disappointment.

Damp and mouldy: yes, potentially

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Damp and mouldy: yes, potentially, Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/>*

The genuine risk is mould. If tea has taken on moisture, from a humid kitchen, a leaky pack, condensation, it can grow mould, and drinking visibly mouldy or musty tea can make you unwell. This is the one scenario where the answer is a firm yes and the action is the bin, immediately, no rescue attempt.

How to recognise the danger

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to recognise the danger, Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/>*

Bin signs: visible fuzzy growth, white or coloured patches, a musty, damp or sour smell, clumping that suggests it got wet. Safe-but-stale signs: looks normal, dry, just smells faint and brews weak. When the two are hard to tell apart, err to the bin, see [can you drink old tea](#).

Brewing does not fix it

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Brewing does not fix it, Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/>*

Boiling water does not make mouldy tea safe; it does not undo spoilage and you would still be drinking the off product. "Brew it stronger to mask it" is exactly the wrong instinct. Spoiled is spoiled, see [does tea go off](#).

Prevention is the whole answer

Because the only real risk is moisture, the entire defence is moisture control: opaque airtight tin, cool dark dry cupboard, away from steam and the kettle, bought in amounts you will drink, see [how to keep tea fresh](#) and [how to store tea](#). Do that and this question never becomes real.

In a sentence

Dry old tea will not make you sick, it will bore you. Damp, mouldy tea can, and goes straight in the bin. Manage moisture and you remove the only genuine danger entirely.

Old tea: bored or unsafe?

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/>*

State of the tea	Risk
Old, dry, clean	none, just dull and flat
Past best-before, well stored	none, the date is a quality guess
Damp, clumped, musty	real: spoiled, can make you unwell, bin it
Visible mould	real: discard immediately, do not brew

Shop the range: browse the [English tea range](#) and [loose leaf range](#).

Reference noted

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reference noted, Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/>*

- [EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine \(2015\)](#)

FROM THE CURATOR teas · Buy on the cup, not on the label. The wider shelf is there for when you know what you like.

More storage reading

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for More storage reading, Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/*

- [Can you drink old tea](#)
- [Does tea go off](#)
- [How to keep tea fresh](#)
- [How to store tea](#)

Want to actually buy a good one?

If this has helped you decide, the next step is buying a genuinely good one judged on the cup rather than the marketing. The products shown on this page are matched to exactly this topic, so they are the starting point. To see the wider range, browse [tea and herbal infusions at teas.co.uk](#) or the full [tea shop](#). As everywhere on this wiki: buy on the cup and the description, never the marketing, check the per-cup price, and remember free UK delivery is over £35.

[Browse the tea range ?](#)

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Can Old Tea Make You Sick?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-old-tea-make-you-sick/*

More from the tea wiki

- [Green tea](#)
- [Black tea](#)
- [Oolong tea](#)
- [White tea](#)
- [Herbal tea](#)
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- [How to make tea properly](#)
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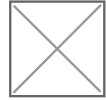
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