Green Tea for Skin: Drinking vs Applying

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Green tea for skin, in short:** applying it (in skincare or as a cooled compress) has better evidence than drinking it. Green tea polyphenols are studied for use on the skin; drinking green tea is pleasant but is not a skincare routine.

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

Green tea turns up in a lot of skincare, and its polyphenols are the reason. But there is a real difference between putting it on your skin and drinking it. Here is how it actually splits.

Applying green tea

Topical green tea extracts are the better studied route for skin, with research interest in their action on the skin and in sun protection. A cooled green tea compress is a gentle, harmless thing to try for tired or slightly irritated skin. See Wikipedia: green tea.

Drinking green tea

Drinking it adds polyphenols and fluid to your day, though any direct change to how your skin looks is small. Enjoy green tea for its own sake; treat any skin benefit as a small bonus rather than the reason.

Sensible expectations

Neither drinking nor applying green tea is a treatment for acne, eczema or ageing. For those, a pharmacist or dermatologist and proven actives will do far more.

At a glance

Use	Evidence
Topical (skincare / compress)	Better studied; applied directly
Drinking	Polyphenol intake; modest skin effect
As a treatment for skin conditions	Not a substitute for proper care

FAQ

Is green tea better for skin drunk or applied? Applied has the stronger evidence; drinking is a general health plus.

Can I use cooled green tea on my face? Yes, as a gentle compress; it is harmless for most people.

Will it clear acne? No; see a pharmacist or dermatologist for that.

This is general information, not medical or dermatological advice. Patch test anything new, and see a professional for a persistent skin concern.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Spend less on prestige, more on freshness. A supermarket bag two months old outdoes a three year old gift tin.

Sources

- Wikipedia: green tea
- Wikipedia: Camellia sinensis

Part of: Tea, Skin & Hair

- Tea, skin and hair (overview)

Related reading

- Green tea
- Matcha explained

Shop green tea: green tea, matcha, the green tea range, or the full tea shop (free UK postage over £35).

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
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- How to make tea properly
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