

Polyphenols in Wine Defend Against Gum Disease Says New Research

A new study published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry found that certain polyphenols in wine are effective in protecting the teeth and gums against pathogenic bacteria. Polyphenols are a plant's natural defense mechanism against infection, and researchers from Spain looked at two polyphenols from red wine and others from commercially available grape seed extract, and different red wine extracts. Of the red wine compounds and extracts studied, two of the pure phenolic compounds found in the wine, caffeic and p-coumaric acids, were found to decrease harmful bacteria's ability to adhere to the mouth.

What Do Polyphenols Do?

Polyphenols are plentiful phytochemicals with antioxidant properties found in a wide range of foods. More than 8,000 of these micronutrients have been identified, and those are divided into four categories; flavonoids, stilbenes, lignans, and phenolic acids. The two most effective compounds from this study are in the last category, caffeic acid and p-coumaric acid.

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Caffeic acid is the more well-known of the two compounds and is most often ingested through coffee. It's also in other beverages like wine, beer, and fruits juices and foods including cereal grains, dried fruit, berries, soy and olive oils, herbs and spices, walnuts, and certain vegetables. The compound's antioxidant properties have been linked to improved

athletic performance, decreased risk of diabetes and cancer, and wrinkle prevention, among other things.

The other compound shown to significantly inhibit the effect of harmful bacteria in the mouth, p-coumaric acid, has shown antibacterial activity before. According to a 2012 study, p-coumaric acid “has dual mechanisms of bactericidal activity: disrupting bacterial cell membranes and binding to bacterial genomic DNA to inhibit cellular functions, ultimately leading to cell death.” It can be found in a variety of berries and other foods like wine, vinegar, peanuts, navy beans, tomatoes, carrots, basil, honey, and garlic, among others.

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Foods with Polyphenols

This study focused on how compounds in red wine can help your teeth, which is odd when you consider that the most common red wine and teeth association has to do with stains. Despite its known health benefits, red wine is also not an obvious choice for healthy teeth for other reasons. Mouth health is directly related to gut health, and alcohol turns into simple sugars in the digestive system, feeding harmful pathogens like candida. Treat yourself to a glass of wine...once in a while, and take care of your teeth with the multitude of other polyphenol friendly foods.

Sources:

- *Wine polyphenols could fend off bacteria that cause cavities and gum disease – ACS*
- *Inhibition of Oral Pathogens Adhesion to Human Gingival Fibroblasts by Wine Polyphenols Alone and in Combination with an Oral Probiotic – Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*
- *Polyphenols – What They Are, and Why You Need Them – Dr.*

Mercola

- *Caffeic Acid* – Healthline
- *p-Coumaric acid kills bacteria through dual damage mechanisms* – ScienceDirect