

## Is Detox Tea Really Effective? The Truth Behind Detox Tea

Khwairakpam Bembem and Sujata Sethy

ICAR-Central Institute of Post-Harvest Engineering and Technology, Ludhiana, India

Corresponding Author: [bembemkhwai@gmail.com](mailto:bembemkhwai@gmail.com) and [sujata.sethy@gmail.com](mailto:sujata.sethy@gmail.com)

Detox teas have become a buzzword in consumer health because of the consumers rising interest in health, wellness, and natural products. It is often driven by social media and advertising, often promoted as a way to cleanse and detoxify the body, reduce bloating, and improve weight loss. The popularity is driven by the perception that these teas aid in weight management, cleansing bowel, and increasing energy, even though scientific evidence for these specific claims are lacking. The market is likely to rise rapidly in the future as more consumers, particularly younger demographics embrace these trends, and as more products are available online and in stores.

### What Is Detox Tea?

Detox tea is typically made from a mix of herbs, roots, and natural plant based botanicals and is often promoted as a way to enhance the body's cleansing processes. These products are marketed to support weight loss, improve digestion, increase energy, clear skin, and the removal of toxins. However, many of these claims can be misleading. The body already has an effective detoxification system- mainly the liver, kidneys, skin, and digestive tract and most 'detox' results, such as weight loss, usually come from temporary water reduction due to diuretic or laxative ingredients like senna or caffeine in the detox tea.

### Common Ingredients In Detox Teas

Detox teas vary widely, but certain ingredients appear frequently and include a blend of herbs, spices, and natural diuretics known to support digestion and the body's natural cleansing processes. Common ingredients are as listed below-

1. Green Tea: Green tea is a base ingredient in many commercial detox blends, high in antioxidants (catechins) that support liver function and metabolism and overall wellness.
2. Dandelion Root/ leaf: A traditional herbal remedy known to support liver and kidney function, helping to eliminate excess fluids and supporting kidney function.
3. Ginger: It is widely used for its anti-inflammatory properties and ability to soothe digestive issues like bloating and gas. Can help soothe digestion and reduce inflammation.
4. Senna Leaf: A common ingredient in many commercial, flat tummy, or slimming products, as it is a natural stimulant laxative that can cause temporary weight loss through fluid and waste elimination.
5. Lemongrass or Peppermint: Provides a cooling effect, improve flavour and aids in digestion, helping to

relieve stomach discomfort and act as a palate cleanser.

6. Turmeric: Contains anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds (curcumin) that support liver health and overall immunity.
7. Tulsi (Holy Basil): Known for increasing metabolism and is considered an effective natural detoxifier.
8. Cinnamon: Offers a warm flavour and has anti-diabetic properties, helping to improve the body's response to insulin and regulate bowel movements.

### Detox Tea Claims to Work

Detox teas tend to support the body in indirect ways, rather than actively eliminating toxins.

1. Hydration and digestion: Herbal teas keep the body hydrated and may soothe the digestive system, reducing temporary bloating.
2. Antioxidants: Ingredients like green tea offer antioxidant benefits, which help protect the body from oxidative stress.
3. Laxatives or diuretics: Some detox teas containing ingredients (like senna, dandelion, caffeine) increase bowel movements or urination, leading to a temporary loss of water weight. This can give the impression of weight loss, but it is typically the weight of water and not fat.
4. Bloating and water retention: The diuretic and laxative effects of some ingredients can reduce bloating in the stomach and water retention, making a feeling of being lighter.
5. Detoxification: This claim of 'flushing toxins' often come from ingredients like milk thistle, which may support liver health, but there is no scientific basis for these teas actually cleansing the liver or removing toxins from the body.

### Does It Really Work?

Whether detox teas really work depends on what you expect. It can help one feeling less bloated, may support hydration, provide antioxidants and may serve as a calming, healthy ritual. However, they cannot detoxify the toxins that the body cannot handle, produce long-term weight loss on their own and replace a balanced diet or medical treatment. Our body is naturally equipped to detoxify itself through the liver and kidneys. A healthy diet, exercise, and staying hydrated are the most effective ways to support this process.

### Potential Risks and Considerations

Detox teas may pose risks including digestive problems like diarrhoea and cramping, dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, and potential heart issues from stimulants and

diuretics. Other considerations include dependency on laxatives, potential interactions with medications, allergic reactions, and in rare cases, liver damage or other serious health problems. They are not a proven weight-loss method and may be unsafe for pregnant or breastfeeding individuals. There are also studies that prompt detox teas to be a potential cause of acute liver failure in some patients.

### **Safety Regulations**

Detox teas sold in India are regulated under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). This requires products to be free from harmful substances, extraneous matter, and added colouring. For teas with added flavours, manufacturers must get registered with the Tea Board and adhere to labelling requirements. Regulations for 'detox teas' are not standardized, they are largely treated as dietary supplements, meaning they are not subject to the same rigorous testing for safety and effectiveness as drugs.

### **Healthier Alternatives to "Detoxing"**

Human body has a natural detoxification system that eliminates toxins and harmful compounds from our body. If

your goal is to support your body's natural detox processes, small lifestyle habits can help more reliably. It can be by-

- Drinking plenty of water
- Eating fiber-rich fruits and vegetables
- Reducing alcohol and processed foods
- Exercising regularly
- Getting enough sleep

Herbal teas can complement these habits, not replace them.

### **Conclusion**

Detox teas are popularly sold product marketed to help remove toxins. It can be a soothing addition to your daily routine and may help reduce bloating or support digestion. However, detox teas do not contain regulated ingredients and may contain powerful herbs, caffeine, laxatives and other ingredients that can cause health problems and should be used with awareness. A healthy lifestyle remains the most effective 'detox' of all.

\*\*\*\*\*