



## Tea, Immunity & Coronavirus

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### Why in News

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During a webinar organised on the occasion of **International Tea Day**, the Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Himachal Pradesh has claimed that **tea chemicals can boost immunity and block coronavirus activity better than anti-HIV drugs.**

IHBT, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh is a constituent of **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**.

### Key Points

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- There was a **special focus on polyphenols** (bioactive chemicals) **that could bind to a specific viral protein** more efficiently than commercially available anti-HIV drugs approved for treating Covid-19 patients.  
These chemicals can **further block the activity of the viral protein that helps the virus to thrive inside human cells.**
- A combination of anti-HIV drugs **Lopinavir and Ritonavir** is being used in many countries to treat Covid-19.
- The findings on Kangra tea comes days after an earlier research study where Indian and Japanese scientists **claimed that Ashwagandha - a popular herb in Ayurveda - may hold an efficient anti-Covid-19 drug.**

### Polyphenols

- Polyphenols are a category of compounds naturally found in plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, tea, dark chocolate, and wine.
- They have **antioxidant properties** that can protect against various diseases. They can be subdivided into **flavonoids, phenolic acid, polyphenolic amides, and other polyphenols.**

- Polyphenols may help prevent blood clots, reduce blood sugar levels, and lower heart disease risk. They may also promote brain function, improve digestion, and offer some protection against cancer.

## Kangra Tea

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- **Kangra tea** is grown in the **Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh**.
- It is well known for its **unique colour and flavour**.
- Kangra tea has got the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- It is loaded with **antioxidants** like **catechins and polyphenols**, and said to offer these health benefits: promotes weight loss, builds immunity, improves oral health and mental alertness, etc.
- It is also **used in making sentizers, soap, vinegar, wine** etc.

**Source: PIB**