

*In 2008 WAIMR celebrates 10 years since its inception and the many internationally-important discoveries which have transformed it into WA's premier adult medical research institute.*



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Media Statement

**HEART HEALTH AND THE HUMBLE CUP OF TEA**

With cardiovascular disease the number one cause of death in the country, West Australian scientists are calling for volunteers to take part in a world-first trial investigating the power of the humble cup of tea to improve heart health.

A team from the Centre for Food and Genomic Medicine (CFGM), based at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) and the University of Western Australia will undertake a two year study to examine the long term effects of drinking tea on blood vessel function, blood pressure and risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

Cardiovascular disease is one of Australia's leading health problems. It affects more than 3.5 million people, killing one Australian every 10 minutes.\*

Trial leader Dr Jonathan Hodgson said the benefits of drinking tea had been proven in short-term studies, but his team would be the first to take this investigation to the next level.

"This research is the first of its kind because it will look at the effects of flavonoids from black tea on blood vessel function, blood pressure and other risk factors for heart disease over a longer time period than ever before," he said.

"We know tea positively impacts heart health over a short time period and believe flavanoids are responsible for those benefits. For example, in a previous study supported by a Heart Foundation grant, we found that tea can improve blood vessel function if drunk regularly over four weeks, and in a population study, we found that a regular cuppa was associated with lower blood pressure in older women.

"What we need to pinpoint now is if these type of benefits continue over many months and whether there are any additional benefits of drinking tea on heart health."

The research team is searching for 100 men and women between the age of 35 and 75 years old to take part in this project.

Volunteers would be divided into two groups and asked to drink three cups of a tea or tea placebo for six months.

"Drinking tea is such a simple and easy thing to do, so I urge everyone who likes drinking tea and thinks they could help to enjoy a cuppa for medical research," Dr Hodgson said.

"Heart disease is such a huge health burden in Australia and affects so many families, so we're keen to find solutions that could help people reduce their risk of developing this devastating disease."

Heart Foundation Chief Executive Maurice Swanson welcomed the research.

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“Health research is an investment in the nation’s wellbeing and we are particularly pleased when local researchers undertake studies into blood vessel function, blood pressure and risk factors for cardiovascular disease that will ultimately benefit all Australians,” Mr Swanson said.

To find out more about the study or to take part, please contact the Centre on (08) 9224 0313.

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\*Source – Heart Foundation [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)

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