

The Rooibos Connection

Rooibos Tea-Drinkers Less Likely To Suffer From Heart Disease

Despite numerous advances in medical technology the prevalence of heart disease continues to escalate. Experts are now saying there may be merit in incorporating alternative ways to prevent and treat heart disease. The challenge, according to Dr Dawie van Velden, is that the prevalence of the major risk factors behind cardiovascular disease (CVD) has increased substantially in the last decade.

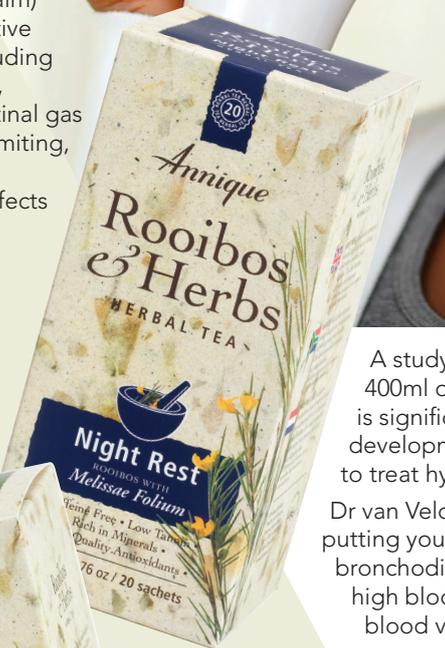
"The biggest single risk factor by far is high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, which affects one in three South African adults. Hypertension is exacerbated by poor eating habits, obesity, lack of physical activity and excessive alcohol intake.

"Across the world, we are seeing a huge move towards alternative and more natural ways of treating illnesses, such as heart disease, which is primarily a result of poor lifestyle behaviours. These natural methods include everything from diet, exercise, smoking cessation to destressing via music therapy, meditation, and even drinking home-brewed Rooibos tea," he remarks.

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Contains Melissa
Folium (lemon balm)

- Relieves digestive problems, including upset stomach, bloating, intestinal gas (flatulence), vomiting, and colic
- Has calming effects that help with anxiety, sleep problems, and restlessness
- Lemon balm is inhaled as aromatherapy for Alzheimer's disease



Contains Wild Jasmine

- It has a calming, relaxing effect
- Anti-depressant, aphrodisiac, and helps users sleep better

A study conducted in Sweden found that 30 to 60 minutes after drinking 400ml of Rooibos, the activity of the angiotensin-converting enzyme or ACE is significantly suppressed. This enzyme is believed to be involved in the development of heart disease and therefore ACE inhibitors are often prescribed to treat hypertension and heart disease.

Dr van Velden explains that when blood vessels constrict, blood pressure increases, putting you at greater risk of a heart attack or stroke. "Rooibos tea is known as a bronchodilator, which not only relieves respiratory conditions, but also reduces high blood pressure. It works in a similar fashion to ACE inhibitors and helps blood vessels to relax and widen, making it easier for blood to flow through.

"Drinking Rooibos tea ticks a lot of the boxes when it comes to maintaining heart health, so make it a daily health choice alongside your five or six portions a day of fruit and vegetables. Rooibos tea as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle may play a significant role in preventing cardiovascular disease," says Dr van Velden.

According to the SA Rooibos Council (SARC), the main heart-health promoting substances in Rooibos may be attributed to the polyphenolic antioxidants in this herbal tea. Rooibos tea contains flavones and flavonols such as quercetin that exhibits an ACE inhibitory action. It helps to prevent and treat cardiovascular disease by inhibiting the migration of smooth muscle cells inside the arteries, a key cause of the narrowing or hardening of the arteries that may lead to a heart attack. These phytochemicals help to lower blood pressure and may relieve vasoconstriction.