

# JOHNS HOPKINS today's news

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## Broccoli Brew: Tea for Tumors?

*Sold only in Colo., cancer researchers' new beverage aims to boost health*

By Karen Auge

Denver Post Medical Writer

Well, they're not exactly promising that. But a couple of **Johns Hopkins University researchers** have brewed up a tea they say combines that beverage's natural disease-fighting properties with one found in broccoli. And they're offering it, for now, only in Colorado.

Brassica teas - black or green, flavored or not, with or without caffeine and the first tea to be fortified with sulforaphane harvested from broccoli - debuted in Wild Oats and Vitamin Cottage stores this week.

Brassica Protection Products brass swears that even though they've spiked their tea with a chemical from broccoli, there's no hint of George Bush The Elder's least-favorite vegetable in the beverage. A random and purely unscientific sip-test Wednesday confirmed that.

"This is a very exciting, scientifically rational combination of two foods, for which there is a lot evidence that they provide health benefits for diseases," said **Dr. Paul Talalay, a cancer researcher at Johns Hopkins and a Brassica principal**.

Those diseases include Alzheimer's, heart disease and cancer.

Combining the beneficial elements of both tea and broccoli produces a disease-fighting force more powerful than either would alone, Talalay said.

If the tea, which sells for between \$5 and \$6 for a package of 20 bags, does well in Colorado, Brassica chief executive officer Tony Talalay - Paul's son - said the company hopes to take it nationwide.

So why is Colorado the test market?

"It's a good tea market, and there's a lot of interest in unusual, gourmet and health-type teas there," Tony Talalay said.

Colorado already eats up the company's brocco-sprouts.

"It's one of our best (sprout markets) in terms of per capita consumption," the younger Talalay said. "And we have a very good sprout-grower out there."

In Boulder, of course.

The elder Talalay and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins first attracted attention in 1992 when they identified a connection between eating lots of cruciferous vegetables - like cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts and, of course, broccoli - and reduced cancer risk.

The cancer-fighting chemical in those vegetables, Talalay concluded, is sulforaphane.

Problem was, the amount of that chemical varied wildly from one broccoli floret to another.

So Talalay and his partner, Jed Fahey, a Johns Hopkins pharmacology researcher, decided to harvest the compound from broccoli and meld it in a concentrated dose with alfalfa sprouts.

They formed Brassica Protection Products, in partnership with John Hopkins University, to distribute their cancer-fighting products. The younger Talalay said that a percentage of the profits goes back to the university for research.

Paul Talalay is a passionate proponent of fighting cancers before they start.

By the time they're detected, most cancers have been forming for years, he said. "It's much easier to interrupt the (development) process and even to reverse it" than to kill a full-blown tumor.

One-third of cancers, he said, could be avoided by changes in diet.

But Dr. Tim Byers, a cancer researcher at the University of Colorado, pointed out that "miracle foods" pop up regularly, often to have their curative powers disproved later.

"We're often taking our basic observations about foods as they relate to cancer and making guesses about what compounds may be accountable for that and then giving that compound to lab animals or people thinking that it's going to be preventive and then being disappointed when it doesn't work or worse," Byers said. "My advice on dietary supplements is not to take any of them in high doses."

Not to worry, Talalay says. He recommends that for maximum benefit, people eat a couple of ounces of broccoli two or three times a week. And "you get that amount in one tea bag," he said.

## Antioxidant tea

**Product:** Brassica teas

**Ingredients:** A combination of black and green tea and sulforaphane, a substance found in broccoli

**Properties:** Johns Hopkins University researchers say the teas can help prevent Alzheimer's, heart disease and some forms of cancer.

**Cost:** \$5-\$6 for a package of 20 bags

**How to get it:** Available through Wild Oats and Vitamin Cottage stores in Colorado. Phone 866-747-0001 or visit [www.brassica.com](http://www.brassica.com)



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