

Sapporo Breweries study finds beer may have anti-virus properties

By Huffington Post

Does beer have anti-virus powers? According to a new study funded by Japanese beer company Sapporo Breweries, a “key ingredient” found in the world’s most popular alcoholic beverage may very well help stave off winter sniffles.

Researchers at Sapporo Medical University found that humulone, a chemical compound in hops, was effective against the respiratory syncytial (RS) virus, AFP reports. In addition, humulone was also found to have an anti-inflammatory effect, according to Sapporo’s news release.

“The RS virus can cause serious pneumonia and breathing difficulties for infants and toddlers, but no vaccination is available at the moment to contain it,” Jun Fuchimoto, a researcher from the beer company, told AFP. The RS virus, which is said to be particularly prevalent in the winter months, can also cause symptoms similar to that of the common cold in adults.

But before you reach for that bottle of your favorite brew, harboring dreams of winter-illness domination, be warned: Since only small quantities of humulone can be found in beer, researchers say a person would have to drink about 30 12 oz. cans of the alcoholic drink to benefit from the anti-virus effect, AFP notes.

Japan’s Kyoto Shimbun News reports that Sapporo Breweries now hopes to create humulone-containing food and (non-alcoholic) beverages that both adults and children can consume.

This is not the first time in recent months that beer has been touted for its “healthful properties” by people in the industry.

In November, Alexis Nasard, Heineken’s chief commercial officer, announced that beer was not only natural but “healthy.” In an interview with CNBC, Nasard also said that beer has fewer calories than a lot of things, including a glass of milk.

However, while experts agree that beer may be beneficial for some people when consumed in moderation, guzzling too much of the brew can also result in heartburn, weight gain, dehydration and a slew of other physical and social hazards that can be caused by drinking too much alcohol.