



The Spinal Column

Soy U Think U Eat Healthy?

By Dr. Jonathan Eto, B.Sc., B.Ed., C.Ped., D.C.



Soy U Interested in Eating Healthy?

As our culture is taking an informed approach to our diet, we often think about substitutes to red-meat or lactose products, or perhaps we are looking for something that can help with heart disease, osteoporosis or even cancer...

You're full of beans!

Soy... ya! What is soy all about? In its purest sense, soy is a form of bean - Soybeans!. Since they were first introduced into Canada in 1893, they have been described as the "miracle crop of many uses." Their protein, oil and constituents have been used not only as food, but for colouring crayons, biodiesel fuel, candles, and even "soy silk" which is now made to manufacture clothing! Soybeans are also a rich source of calcium, iron, zinc, phosphorus, magnesium, B-vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids and fibre. They are also cholesterol free, low in saturated fat, and are an excellent source of protein. Soy is one of the few plant foods that contain the proper balance of the essential amino acids. They even contain anti-oxidants!

What are some of the health benefits?

I Love You Soy Much!

Recent evidence indicates that a soy-rich diet can help prevent coronary heart disease. The Food & Drug Administration in the U.S. concluded that a diet containing

25 grams or more of soy protein per day lowers blood cholesterol. The greater your blood cholesterol, the greater the effect! Though the mechanism is still unknown, it is suggested that it is due to the pattern of the amino acid building blocks in soy protein while other research suggests that it is due to isoflavones contained in soy protein.

I'm Getting Soy Emotional!

These isoflavones are also known as plant estrogens or phytoestrogen. At different times, these isoflavones may either interfere or enhance the effect with estrogen produced by your body. Therefore it may regulate estrogen when this hormone is declining or fluctuating. This can help alleviate symptoms of PMS!

The effects of soy's isoflavones are not as well understood as its protein, but their role in several diseases and conditions affected by hormone activity is being investigated. This includes hormone-dependent cancers, osteoporosis, and symptoms of menopause.

CAN IT FIGHT CANCER?

Soy's soluble fibre and anti-oxidative properties protects the body from many digestive related cancers, such as colon and rectal cancer.

Among all cancers, however, data on soy and prostate cancer seems to be the most promising as many studies support its role in the prevention and possible treatment of prostate cancer.

Some studies indicate that soy offers a protective effect against breast cancer, while a few studies showed the estrogen-like effects in isoflavones may be harmful. Phytoestrogens in soy foods are "anti-estrogens" and may block estrogen from reaching the receptors and therefore potentially protecting women from developing breast cancer. Pre-menopausal women may benefit from eating soy foods as their natural estrogen levels are high, however, this may not be true to post-menopausal women. Research indicates that soy could become "pro-estrogen" in women with low levels of natural estrogen. In other words, concentrated soy supplements may add estrogen to the body and possibly increase the risk of breast cancer in post-menopausal women.

TAKE A BITE OUT OF OSTEOPOROSIS

Many soy foods are naturally high in calcium. In addition,

soy also contains magnesium and boron, which are important co-factors of calcium for bone health. In fact, soy isoflavones may inhibit the breakdown of bones. In particular, daidzein, a type of isoflavone, is very similar to the drug ipriflavone, which is used throughout Europe and Asia to treat osteoporosis. Studies also support that high soy diets can increase bone mineral density and also significantly lower risk of fracture, particularly among early post-menopausal women.

MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS

Because of the isoflavones “buffering” ability with estrogen, women with a high soy diet report fewer hot flashes during menopause. In Japan, where soy foods are often consumed daily, women are only one-third as likely to report menopausal symptoms as in the United States or Canada. In fact, there is no word in the Japanese language that translates into "hot flashes".

Weight a Minute!

Research supports claims that soy consumption can assist in weight loss too! Soy protein is a low-fat source of high-quality protein that can help build lean muscle mass when combined with regular exercise. Soy protein can help the body feel less hungry, and helps feel fuller longer. It is the

only vegetable that contains more protein than carbohydrates and also has a low-glycemic index which means it won't cause a rapid rise in blood sugar levels after consumption.

OTHER

Soy's protein and soluble fibre help regulate glucose levels and kidney filtration, which helps control diabetic conditions and kidney disease.

Not Soy Good!

Though soy has several benefits to the body, and is a great alternative to allergies such as lactose, or substitute for red-meat, every person is different. Do realize that allergies to soy is common and that people with a history of kidney stones should stay away, The high levels of oxalate in soybeans can bind with calcium to form kidney stones.

The Joy of Soy!

Some common soy foods are Tofu, Miso soup, Edamame (green beans), Soy Burgers, Soy Nuts, Soy Milk/Juice, etc.

Stay healthy and enjoy soy!

About the Author:



Dr. Eto graduated from York University with a degree in biology. He then completed teacher's college at Brock University before earning his Doctor of Chiropractic from the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in 2000. To add a focus on Orthotic and foot care, he continued his education in 2007 to become a Pedorthist while studying with the Robert M. Palmer M.D. Institute of Biomechanics. He is also bilingual in English and French.

An active person in the community, Dr. Eto is the Official Team Chiropractor for the Brampton Battalion (OHL) and has worked for several years with women's amateur hockey (PWHL). He also holds a Black Belt in Judo, and has competed internationally while training with Kidokan Judo Club at the Brampton YMCA. His greatest achievement was to be ranked second in Canada.

Athletic injuries have been a focus of Dr. Eto's as he has worked with several athletes and sports teams from amateur to professional levels. Dr. Eto also enjoys supply teaching on his days off, keeping in touch with youth and volunteering his services with their extracurricular programs. Other special interests are in Photography, Music (former disc jockey), Swimming (retired lifeguard) and playing Hockey and Baseball.

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