

SOY -- OH BOY! **Things To Consider About This Not Always Healthy Health Food**

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(More information can be found at <http://foodfitnessbyphone.com/articles/soy.htm>)

Food Factoid:

Over 60% of processed foods contain soy or soy derivatives.

People frequently ask me what I think about soy, expecting that I will respond with a simple "it's good" or "it's bad" for you. Instead, I frequently reply with a sign and then say "soy - oh, boy!" -- because the answer is a little more complicated than that. Following are some...

Things To Consider About Soy

Soy is one of the most common food allergens. It contains a protein enzyme inhibitor that prevents it from being properly digested. Symptoms range from digestive disturbances such as gas and bloating to severe depression and anxiety. To compound the problem, 60% or more of America's soybean crop is genetically engineered (GE) which increases its potential for allergic reactions and digestive disturbances. Regardless of the health benefits you may have heard associated with soy, if you can't digest it properly, it won't do you any good and may in fact, be causing you harm.

Asian women have very low rates of menopausal complaints, heart disease, breast cancer and osteoporosis. The soy industry, with little evidence to support their claims, attributes this to soy foods being a regular part of the Asian diet. These popular claims disregard extensive research that shows otherwise, and also disregard other dietary and lifestyle factors at play in Asian cultures. For example, the traditional Asian diet contains primarily whole, natural foods and little to no processed foods, while the American diet is made up of primarily processed foods.

Soy is best consumed in a fermented form such as miso, tempeh, natto and soy or tamari sauce. These are the forms of soy most prevalent in Asian cuisine. Fermentation makes it easier to digest and less likely to cause problems. Fermented soy protein powders are now available. Tofu is best eaten warm with a little fish or other animal protein to increase digestibility.

The most allergenic and difficult to digest forms of soy include: soy flour, non-fermented soy powders, soy grits, soy flakes, soy nuts and soy nut butter. Super-refined soy products, such as soy isolates, soy protein, soybean oil, textured soy protein (TSP), and textured vegetable protein (TVP) are also not recommended as the soy is subjected to high pressure, high temperatures and caustic chemicals as part of the processing. Soy cheeses and soymilks are often highly refined as well.

Soy reduces thyroid hormone and slows your metabolism. Consequently, it is not appropriate for those who are hypothyroid or trying to lose weight. Sea vegetables on the other hand stimulate the thyroid and are frequently combined with soy in Asian cuisine such as miso soup, which results in the two counterbalancing one another.

Before you decide to incorporate large amounts of soy in your diet, keep these considerations in mind. Be sure it is an appropriate food for your body, consumed in its most bioavailable forms and organic (non-GMO) whenever possible.

And, as with any of the most common food allergens (wheat, dairy, soy, corn, sugar) if you do include soy in your diet, do so on a rotational basis consuming it no more than once every 4-5 days (never daily!) in the user-friendly forms described above. This will allow the body adequate processing time and reduce the likelihood of developing or exacerbating sensitivities and other problems.