

# Complete Health Truths

Exploring natural health by getting back to the basics.

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## Soy Products Good or Bad?

By Christina Mroz, Health Coach

### Fact or Fiction:

**Myth:** Use of soy as a food dates back thousands of years.

**Truth:** Soy was first used as a food during the late Chou dynasty (1134-246 BC), only after the Chinese learned to ferment soybeans to make foods like *tempeh*, *natto* and *tamari*.

**Myth:** Asians consume large amounts of soy foods.

**Truth:** Average consumption of soy foods in Japan and China is 10 grams (about 2 teaspoons) per day. Asians consume soy foods in small amounts as a condiment, and not as a replacement for animal foods.

**Myth:** Modern soy foods have the same health benefits as traditionally fermented soy foods.

**Truth:** Most modern soy foods are not fermented to neutralize toxins in soybeans, and are processed in a way that denatures proteins and increases levels of carcinogens.

**Myth:** Soy foods can prevent osteoporosis.

**Truth:** Soy foods can cause deficiencies in calcium and vitamin D, both needed for

healthy bones. Calcium from bone broths and vitamin D from seafood, lard and organ meats prevent osteoporosis in Asian countries—not soy foods.

**Myth:** Soy estrogens (isoflavones) are good for you.

**Truth:** Soy isoflavones are phyto-endocrine disrupters. At dietary levels, they can prevent ovulation and stimulate the growth of cancer cells. Eating as little as 30 grams (about 4 tablespoons) of soy per day can result in hypothyroidism with symptoms of lethargy, constipation, weight gain and fatigue.

**Truth:** The human body cannot use the compound that resembles vitamin B12 in soy; in fact, soy foods cause the body to require more B<sub>12</sub>.

**Truth:** Soy foods contain trypsin inhibitors that inhibit protein digestion and affect pancreatic function. Soy foods increase the body's requirement for vitamin D, needed for strong bones and normal growth. Soy also lacks cholesterol, which is essential for the development of the brain and nervous system.

**Truth:** In some people, consumption of soy foods will lower cholesterol, but there is no evidence that lowering

cholesterol improves one's risk of having heart disease.

**Truth:** From a biblical view, Jesus would have never consumed soy products because they were not available in Israel at this time.

### How Soy is Processed is the Problem:

The production of soymilk is relatively simple. In order to remove as much of the trypsin inhibitor content as possible, the beans are first soaked in an alkaline solution. The pureed solution is then heated to 115 degrees Centigrade in a pressure cooker. This method destroys most (but not all) of the anti-nutrients, which makes it very difficult to digest and reduces its effectiveness. The phytate content remains in soymilk to block the uptake of essential minerals. In addition, the alkaline soaking solution produces a carcinogen, lysinealane, and reduces the cystine content, which is already low in the soybean. Nitrosamines, which are potent carcinogens, are often found in soy protein foods, and are greatly increased during the high temperature drying process.

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## **Cancer Preventing or Cancer Causing?**

The food industry says to consume soy products for their cancer preventing properties. Isoflavone aglycones are anticarcinogenic substances research suggests that phytoestrogen (isoflavones) found in traditionally fermented soybean products. However, in non-fermented soy products such as tofu and soymilk, these isoflavones are present in an altered form as beta-glycoside conjugates, which have no anti-carcinogenic effect. So could be factors in breast cancer, birth

defects, infantile leukemia, and a depressed thyroid.

## **Are soy products easy to digest, as claimed?**

**Unfermented** soy products are hard to digest. Unfermented soybeans contain phytic acid, which prevents the absorption of minerals in our body, such as calcium, magnesium, iron, and zinc. (This is why many vegetarians suffer from mineral deficiencies.)

**Fermented** soy products probably are miso, natto and tempeh, which are usually made with organically grown soybeans, have a long history of use that is generally beneficial when combined with other elements of the Oriental diet including rice, sea foods, fish broth, organ meats and fermented vegetables. While fermented soy products contain protein, vitamins, anti-carcinogenic substances and important fatty acids, they can under no circumstances be called nutritionally complete—which is why they should be combined with rice, fish, and fermented vegetables.

## **Resources and Further Reading:**

### **(Decide for yourself is soy is right for your health.)**

The Maker's Diet by Jordan Rubin

Restoring Your Digestive Health by Jordan Rubin & Joseph Brasco

[http://www.mercola.com/1997/archive/soybean\\_concerns.htm](http://www.mercola.com/1997/archive/soybean_concerns.htm)

[http://www.mercola.com/2000/feb/13/more\\_on\\_soy.htm](http://www.mercola.com/2000/feb/13/more_on_soy.htm)

<http://www.westonaprice.org/mythstruths/mtsoy.html>

<http://www.westonaprice.org/soy/darkside.html>