



## SOY

There is a lot of confusion surrounding soy. On the one hand, we are told that soy is good for you because it is a good source of protein, being a complete protein like meat or dairy, that soy has a good balance of carbohydrate and fat and that it is rich in minerals. On the other hand, we are told that soy has isoflavones that make it highly estrogenic and enzyme inhibitors that inhibit protein digestion. So, let's uncover some of the confusion.

Soybeans are a legume like any other beans we eat (black beans, kidney, etc.) so it is high in protein, carbohydrates, fat and fiber. According to Marion Nestle, "Soybeans have been grown and consumed as part of traditional diets in China and other Asian countries for millennia..." (What to Eat, Marion Nestle) Contrary to popular belief, in traditional Asian diets, soy is consumed as a condiment and is usually fermented, because fermentation makes soy more digestible. Fermented soy foods are: **Miso, Soy Sauce, Tempeh and Natto**. Some other forms of soy are: Tofu, Edamame, **Soy Milk, Soy Yogurt, Soy Cheese, and Soy Ice Cream, Soybean Oils, Soy Protein and Soy Infant Formula**.

The problem with soy is that, unless it is fermented, soy is high in phytic acid, which reduce the assimilation of calcium, magnesium, copper, iron and zinc. Soy is also high in protease inhibitors, which block protein digestion and can cause swelling of the pancreas. Also, as mentioned above, the isoflavones in soy are structurally similar to estrogen and have been shown to disrupt hormone balance in both men and women. The phytoestrogens in soy can disturb thyroid function, and soy consumption increases the body's need for vitamins B12 and D.

Another problem with soy in the United States is that it is very high in pesticides and is often genetically modified. According to Robyn O'Brien, 92% of soy grown worldwide is genetically modified. Studies have shown that genetically modified soy affected liver and pancreas in mice and a human study noted that the altered gene in soy was transferred into the DNA of bacteria living in the human gut (The Unhealthy Truth, Robyn O'Brien).

So, if you do want to eat soy, stick to the following:

- Fermented soy foods
- Minimally processed soy products
- Occasional consumptions of Tofu or Edamame (Organic if possible)

For More Information, check out:

What to Eat by Marion Nestle, PhD

The Unhealthy Truth, by Robyn O'Brien

The Whole Soy Story: The Dark Side of America's Health Food by Kayla Daniel, PhD

Soy Alert! at [www.westonaprice.org](http://www.westonaprice.org)