



Center for Human Nutrition Health & Wellness Newsletter OCTOBER 2005



Soy Foods Role in Breast Cancer

By: Lona Sandon, MEd, RD/LD

Soy based foods have been promoted to assist in the treatment or prevention of a range of health issues including menopause, heart disease, osteoporosis, and hormone related cancers including breast cancer. Studies of soy's role in breast cancer have been contradictory. Does it prevent or promote breast cancer in those that are high risk? How much soy should be eaten and at what stage of life to decrease a women's risk? Despite the scientific controversy, many women nevertheless report eating soy for better breast health.



More than 450 women with a family history of breast cancer took part in a research study lead by the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Pennsylvania . The researchers evaluated each participant's diet pattern to determine the amount and quality of soy included in the diet as well as reasons why the participants include or don't include soy in their diet.

Researchers found that almost a third of the participants rated their selves as soy consumers. Of the soy consumers, almost half believe that eating soy will reduce their risk of cancer. Forty-three percent reported eating soy foods at least one time per month. "I try to eat healthy" and "I like the taste" were cited by more than 60% of the soy consumers as reasons for consuming soy. A little more than 50% believe soy foods are lower in fat than their animal counterparts. Vegetable burgers, tofu, soy nuts, and soy milk were the most commonly used soy foods. Lastly, soy consumers were also more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables and exercise more than non-consumers.

Of the women who reported not eating soy, reasons included not knowing how to prepare it, didn't like the taste, products hard to find, and did not believe that the soy foods were healthier.

Soy consumers and non-consumers obtained most of their information about the health benefits of soy from friends, newspapers, and magazines. Other sources include health newsletters, the Internet, product packaging, and health spas. Few sought information from a health professional.

Asian women who consume a soy based diet have a lower incidence of breast cancer. The extent to which soy may be able to reduce risk of breast cancer is unknown.

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Soy Resources:

Websites:

American Cancer Society: Soy and Breast Cancer.

United Soybean Board-Talksoy.com

Supporting Research:

Fang CY, Tseng M, Daly MB . Correlates of Soy Food Consumption in Women at Increased Risk for Breast Cancer. J Amer Diet Assoc. 2005;105(10):1552-1558.

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To Eat or Not to Eat—That is the Question

By: Vickie Vaclavik, PhD, RD

To be or not to be - that is the question" said Shakespeare many years ago. Well, "to eat or not to eat"- that is OUR question!

Such a question may be interpreted in various manners. For example, we may hope that we 1.) DO eat, and have food available, or 2.) may sit down with our family and friends to enjoy food, or 3.) remain healthy without experiencing foodborne illness from unsafe food. Unfortunately, these aforementioned hopes may become quite uncertain, as we have witnessed in the recent hurricane and flooding on the Gulf Coast . Such a tragedy reminds us of the very basic need humans have for food and drink.

In light of recent events we have become intensely aware that we need to do more than HOPE to eat, or enjoy foods or eat safely. We need to DO something. For example, as a society we may be inspired to take steps toward making food available and safe, with an improved food distribution procedure. However, the emphasis of this author is food safety, and we can each do something to influence that reality too, whether personally or professionally.

“Good practices, and everyday practice of the "right" way to do things lessens the chance of illness.“

We may not be employed as a "food handler", yet we want to become knowledgeable regarding safe food handling. Then we want to apply what we know. Most likely we are familiar with someone who "talks with their mouth full" and another who "says grace" at mealtime. Your reaction as you take note may be "how awful!" to the former or "amen!" to the latter. In addition to the words that proceed from out our mouths, we must look also at what goes in - the food we ingest. While planning for the growing, harvesting, refrigerating, delivering, serving and so forth we must simultaneously enforce our protective strategies. It is the job of societies around the globe to regulate good sanitation for its population.

Disease-causing bacteria and many other illness-causing culprits cannot be seen with the bare eye, and we certainly do not carry a microscope to explore a meal prior to its consumption. So what can we do for our gastro-intestinal safety at mealtime? We need to 1.) watch temperature - keep foods hot or cold, 2.) wash hands often and 3.) avoid spreading germs by cross-contamination. Good practices, and everyday practice of the "right" way to do things lessens the chance of illness. The world-over, people read Shakespeare, and likewise, throughout the world, people must eat. Let's keep the food safe. ■ ■ ■

Food Safety Websites

- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service
- National Food Safety Education Month
- Fight Bac.org
- Food Safety.gov
- Food and Drug Association
- American Dietetic Association

Food Quotes

"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched."
- Aesop

"You can tell a lot about a fellow's character by his way of eating jellybeans."
- Ronald Reagan

"Never eat more than you can lift."
- Miss Piggy

Halloween: Pumpkins

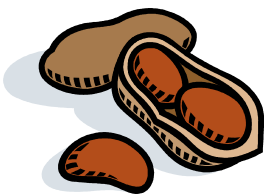
It's the time of year when goblins and ghouls come out to play, so this week on **Healthwatch** we'll be talking about Halloween. When you carve a pumpkin to make your Halloween decor, nutrition experts at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas say you shouldn't ignore what's inside the pumpkin.



Pumpkins are packed with nutrition. Lona Sandon, a registered dietitian at UT Southwestern, says pumpkin is low in fat and calories and full of vitamins. The flesh is a good source of vitamins A and C and potassium. You can oven roast the seeds for a snack or crunchy salad topping that's full of fiber, a healthy fat and vitamin B12.

If you're planning to cook a pumpkin, you'll choose a different pumpkin than one you'd use for carving. Look for a smaller pumpkin, which will likely be softer and tastier. ■ ■ ■

Halloween: Candy Labels



This week on **Healthwatch**, we're talking about Halloween. Peanut allergies are fairly common and quite dangerous among children. Allergists at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas say it's important to read the labels on your Halloween candy if you or your children are allergic to peanuts.

While manufacturers are getting better about labeling candy that contains peanuts, it's possible for candy without peanuts in it to contain peanut residue if it's made in a factory where peanuts are used. Dr. Rebecca Gruchalla, UT Southwestern's chief of allergy, says if you're allergic to peanuts, it's safest to stick to hard candy or well-known treats that don't include peanuts on the ingredient list. Avoid home-made treats and candy without an ingredient list. It might be nice to keep some peanut-free treats handy if you know neighborhood kids have peanut allergies. ■ ■ ■

Halloween: Sweets

We're talking about Halloween this week on **Healthwatch**. Kids look forward to the haul of sweet Halloween loot, while parents look forward to eating the leftover candy or taking advantage of the post-Halloween candy sale. But nutrition experts at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas say parents need to regulate the Halloween sugar intake for themselves and their children.



Lona Sandon, a UT Southwestern nutritionist, says a good candy ration is no more than three bite-sized pieces or one fun-sized bar. Set some rules about when candy can be eaten, such as for dessert after dinner but not before a meal. Limit candy eating to a few times a week.

Parents should set an example by not overdoing it on candy, themselves. Staying away from the post-Halloween sales might help. ■ ■ ■

Health Watch is a Public Service of the Office of News and Publications and is intended to provide general information only and should not replace the advice of a medical professional. You should contact your physician if you have questions about any of these topics.

Quick & Healthy Recipe of the Month: Creamy Cabbage Soup



This is an excellent recipe for cabbage. You'll enjoy the wonderful flavor and creamy texture. Add a whole grain roll to complete this meal.

- 1 small head of cabbage (about 1 pound)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 ounces low-fat turkey smoked sausage, sliced
- 4 cups fat-free chicken broth*
- 3/4 cup cold nonfat milk
- 1/4 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

Chop cabbage. Combine cabbage, onion, sausage and chicken broth in a large saucepan. Simmer until vegetables are tender. Combine cold milk with flour in covered container and shake well to prevent lumps. Stir into soup along with pepper. Heat until bubbly.



Makes 7 1/2 cups
(5 servings); Each Serving:
1 1/2 cups; Carb Servings: 1; Exchanges: 1/2 starch, 1 lean meat, 1 vegetable; calories 121, total fat 2g, saturated fat 1g, cholesterol 15mg, sodium 282mg, total carbohydrate 15g, dietary fiber 1g, protein 11g

*Sodium is figured for reduced-salt.

Source:

Quick & Healthy Volume II
ScaleDown Publishing, Inc.,
© by Brenda J. Ponichtera, R.D.
<http://www.QuickandHealthy.net>

Available at local bookstores or from:
ScaleDown Publishing, Inc.
1519 Hermits Way
The Dalles, Oregon 97058

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Soy Foods Role in Breast Cancer (continued from Page 1)

Recent studies have reported a relationship showing that as soy or isoflavone (estrogen-like substance found in soy foods) intake goes up, breast cancer risk goes down. The average consumption of soy foods in this study was only six to seven servings per month, well below the typical Asian diet pattern and below the two servings per day or almost 50 milligrams of isoflavones used in studies that support soy in breast cancer risk lowering. In addition, evidence supports that isoflavone intake during adolescents may be cancer protective later in life.

On the contrary, these same isoflavones may be cancer promoting in women with a high risk of breast cancer. Isoflavones mimic estrogen and high levels of estrogen over a lifetime have been associated with higher risk.

Bottom line: Insufficient scientific information exists to make recommendations for soy consumption and lowering the risk of breast cancer. Lowering your risk may have more to do with your overall lifestyle including physical activity, low-fat diet, high fruit and vegetable intake, and alcohol intake than any effects of soy. See a registered dietitian to help you plan a balanced diet including low-fat soy based foods. ■ ■ ■