



Celebrate Soyfoods By Getting the Facts and the Flavor

Learn the facts about soyfoods and your health. “Myth-information” may be preventing you from getting the news—and the benefits—associated with eating soyfoods.

Myth #1: Anybody who has had breast cancer should avoid traditional soyfoods such as tofu and soymilk.

Actuality: In fact, new research studies offer evidence that breast cancer patients who consume soyfoods after their diagnosis actually fare better than patients who do not consume soyfoods. The American Cancer Society says that breast cancer patients can safely consume up to three servings of traditional soyfoods per day.

Myth #2: People in Japan and other Asian countries consume only small amounts of soyfoods and use them primarily as condiments.

Actuality: The results from large surveys—often involving tens of thousands of people—indicate that on average, Japanese adults and older adults in Shanghai consume 1½ servings of soyfoods per day. But those who consume a bit more tend to have better health—so shoot for about two servings per day.

Myth #3: Soyfoods cause mineral deficiencies or imbalances.

Actuality: This myth probably got started because soyfoods contain phytate and another plant chemical, oxalate (also found in spinach), which inhibit calcium absorption. However, the evidence unequivocally shows that calcium absorption from soymilk and cow’s milk are similar. And new research indicates iron absorption from soy is excellent.

Nor surprisingly, there is no evidence that soyfoods cause mineral deficiencies or imbalances.

Myth #4: Soyfoods contain estrogen and men who eat them may experience feminization or even impair their fertility.

Actuality: Soyfoods do not contain estrogen, and the clinical evidence indicates that soyfoods do not feminize men—soy doesn't lower testosterone levels or lower sperm concentration. The myth may have its roots in the fact that naturally present isoflavones in soyfoods are commonly referred to as plant estrogens, or phytoestrogens. The good news is that soyfoods may offer several health benefits for men. For example, evidence suggests soyfoods are protective against prostate cancer.

Myth #5: Soyfoods should be avoided because they are harmful to the thyroid.

Actuality: More than 20 clinical studies have shown that neither eating soyfoods nor using soybean extracts cause thyroid problems. This myth is based on the results from studies in which the effects of isolated soybean components (not soyfoods) on individual thyroid cells in test tubes have been evaluated.
