

# FAQ: HELPING YOU DIGEST SOYFOODS



**Are soyfoods healthy for all members of my family?** Yes, and they are delicious! Soyfoods are nature's best plant food — low in saturated fat, free of cholesterol, and rich in essential nutrients. Soyfoods have many benefits unique to each member of your family, from their protective effects against prostate and breast cancers, to satiety and weight loss, and lowering high cholesterol.

**Is soy good for women?** Research has found soyfoods, consumed regularly, improve fertility, prevent gestational diabetes in pregnant women, and relieve menopause symptoms, such as hot flashes. More importantly, studies have determined that high soy consumption has no effect on women getting breast cancer for the first time, and discovered that women who eat a lot of soyfoods have reduced risk of breast cancer recurrence.

**Does soy contain estrogen?** Soyfoods do not contain estrogen. In addition to proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, soyfoods — as do all plants — contain bio-active compounds such as isoflavones. The chemical structure of these compounds is similar to estrogen,

however isoflavones do not act like estrogen in the body. Isoflavones are much weaker, as they have approximately 1/1,000th the biological activity of human estrogens.

**I've heard soy isn't safe. Is that true?** Unfortunately, there are many myths surrounding the intake of soyfoods. Many stem from rat studies where they were given extremely large doses of isoflavones (a component of soybeans) that would not be consumed through any normal diet (think several cartons of soymilk a day). Clinical research done in humans shows no negative effects of soy on healthy people.

**Isn't all soy GMO?** Many soyfoods are non-GMO. If you prefer non-GMO products, you can find them labeled as "certified organic" or "made from non-GMO soybeans." These include all soymilk and non-dairy products, tofu, edamame, tempeh and some meat alternatives made from soy.

**How does soy protein compare to other plant proteins?** Soy protein is unique among plant proteins because it supplies a high-quality,

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easily digestible complete protein that contains all essential amino acids needed for growth. Soy is also better for the environment, using fewer natural resources such as water and land than other protein sources.

### **How do I get the picky-eaters in my family to like soyfoods?**

Soyfoods are just like other foods. Your kids probably don't like every fruit and vegetable, so mix and match. Often it takes 7-12 tries before kids will eat something new. Some family-friendly ideas include:

- Start with a fun finger food like edamame.
- Mix soy crumbles with ground beef or ground turkey in chili or tacos.
- Make soymilk and fruit smoothies with your kid's favorite fruit.

### **How much processing do soyfoods receive?**

It depends. For soymilk, soybeans are soaked, rinsed, mashed, heated, and pressed to separate the milk. To turn soymilk into tofu, you add calcium or magnesium salts to curdle the liquid, like is done to make cheese from dairy milk.

### **How does soymilk measure up to cow's milk?**

Soymilk is nutrient-rich with levels of protein, calcium, and vitamin A comparable to those found in cow's milk. However, cow's milk has more than 9 times as much saturated fat as soymilk. Cholesterol-free soymilk contains 7 grams of protein per cup, whereas almond, coconut, and rice average 1 gram. That's why soymilk is the only plant alternative

recognized as a substitute for milk in USDA's MyPlate.

**Why is soy lecithin added to foods?** Lecithin is a natural part of the soybean found within the oil and acts as a stabilizer in foods, which means it does everything from solidifying chocolate to giving dressings a creamy texture.

**Fermented foods are trending, but do non-fermented soyfoods have any benefits?** Fermentation is good because it promotes the absorption of nutrients. But don't rule out non-fermented soyfoods such as tofu, soymilk and edamame. Studies continue to find health benefits of regularly consuming these foods, including one that showed a lower risk of developing stomach cancer.

### **My daughter is a vegetarian, how can she get adequate iron?**

There is often concern over vegans and vegetarians not getting enough iron, however nearly all studies find vegetarians' iron levels are within the healthy "normal" range. It was found that vegetarians' and vegans' digestive systems adapt to absorb more nutrients from their plant-based diets.

**Do soyfoods benefit in building muscle strength?** No matter what age you are, soy protein and soyfoods can be considered lean, green, protein machines – the only plant protein equivalent to animal protein with all nine essential amino acids in ratios needed for muscle growth and recovery.

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