

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF NUTS

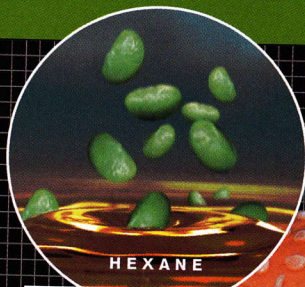
Nuts have a number of properties that make them beneficial for our health.

- Rich in nutrients. Nuts contain healthy nutrients such as a variety of minerals and vitamins, and they are rich in fiber and protein.

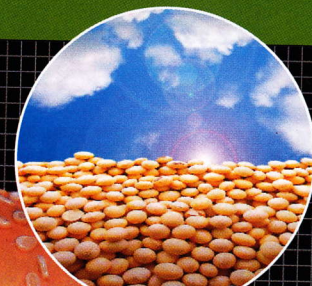
- Contain "good" fats. Nuts are a source of healthy unsaturated fats which have been shown to help lower lipids.

- Contain plant sterols. Nuts contain specific phytochemicals known as plant sterols, which may have lipid-lowering effects.

Good for health. In addition to lipid-lowering effects, nuts also improve vascular function and lower oxidative stress—all of which may decrease heart disease risk and help prevent other types of vascular disease. According to study authors (*Arch Intern Med* 2010) eating nuts may also help lower risk of type 2 diabetes.



PROCESSED SOY



FERMENTED SOY



THE SOY BURGER

WARNING: Soy products may contain MSG; may be genetically modified; have been known to stunt human growth and cause problems with the pancreas. Soy may have anti-thyroid properties, may contribute to or worsen hypothyroidism and may cause infertility and problems with menstruation in women.

CONSUMER REPORT

SUCKERS FOR SOY: ARE CONSUMERS GETTING A RAW DEAL?

Do you avoid soy? If you said "Yes," are you sure? You'd be shocked at how many foods contain soy, tucked away in the ingredients list, often disguised by other names.

BY LORRA GARRICK AND DWAYNE HINES II

Beware of processed soy. But hey, isn't soy the reason breast cancer rates in Japan are much lower than those in the U.S.? After all, don't the Japanese eat a lot of soy?

Guess what: Americans consume soy in gargantuan quantities: soy milk, soy yogurt, soy cheese, soy burgers, soy protein powder, soy protein bars, and all the soy that turns up in foods that you'd least expect it to, such as Whole Foods' chocolate mousse, parfaits and chocolate crumb pie, and a slew of other products like munchies, frozen dinners, commercially baked cookies, breads, cereals, Mexican foods, crackers, mayonnaise, salad dressings and even nutritional supplements like probiotics!

Don't be too convinced that Asians eat more soy than Americans. It's a myth that people in Asia eat a lot of soy, and what little soy they do eat is usually fermented, not unfermented. Plus, other variables can explain the disparity in cancer rates.

One reason that soy shows up everywhere is because it's a cheap filler and cheap vegetable oil for many foods. Without soy, nobody would get sick.

A PHYSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Kristine Gedroic, MD, encourages her patients to avoid soy for several reasons. "The main reason is that soy is high in **phytic acid**, which is present in all grains and legumes, but particularly high in soy," says Dr. Gedroic, who specializes in integrative medicine in Morristown, NJ.

"Phytic acid blocks the absorption of other important nutrients from the gastrointestinal tract. In effect, we are reducing our intake of 'healthy minerals' when we eat soy." These nutrients include calcium and copper. "Other reasons include soy as being one of the top five food allergens and its genetic modification, making it a less than ideal food to consume."

People in Asia eat more of a particular form of soy: fermented, such as natto, tempeh and miso. This is a far cry from the heavily processed forms of soy (unfermented) that Americans consume. "The fermentation process helps neutralize the phytic acid and therefore, allows for the absorption of healthy minerals," says Dr. Gedroic, who does advise patients to eat the traditionally fermented forms mentioned above.

Soy foods that are touted as great meat alternatives often contain MSG, frequently disguised by other names such as *texturized vegetable protein* or *autolyzed yeast extract*. Furthermore, the vast majority of soy products in the U.S. are genetically modified (GMO).

This begs the question: Why do many medical professionals continue to support soy consumption? Dr. Gedroic explains, "There has been a lot of marketing in recent years espousing the virtues of soy, which include that soy is low in fat and high in fiber." She further explains:

- Soy phytoestrogens are endocrine disruptors and have the ability to cause infertility and problems with menstruation in women.

- Soy phytoestrogens have anti-thyroid properties and may contribute to or worsen hypothyroidism.

- Factors in soy inhibit protein digestion and may cause problems with the pancreas.

There has been press lately about the rash of premature puberty occurring in girls as young as 9 years. "Unfortunately, many babies who were fed soy formula have several issues later in life that are likely linked to soy, high levels of food intolerances in general and possibly precocious puberty due to its estrogenic effects," says Dr. Gedroic.

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, soy is among the top 10 most common food allergens. If you're gluten-intolerant, watch out: Many gluten-free foods either contain added soy (soy flour, soy lecithin, etc.), or, are processed in the same facility that processes soy; cross-contamination can result. This cross-contamination can also occur in many gluten-containing foods as well. Read any disclaimers beneath the ingredients list!

"Colitis sufferers certainly need to avoid soy, as well as anyone with IBS, GERD or other functional bowel disorder," says Dr. Gedroic. "I use a special diet for the inflammatory bowel disorders that does not include soy."

It's not over; here's another downside to unfermented soy: It contains hemagglutinin and trypsin inhibitors, elements that stunt human growth. These don't sound like items a person aiming to increase lean mass would want to put in his or her body.

HEARD OF HEXANE?

Soybeans are typically run through a hexane "bath" in the manufacturing process. Hexane is a gasoline refining byproduct that has been linked to nervous system disorders and skin problems. The following name brands, says the Cornucopia Institute, use hexane: Garden Burger, Soy Boy, Boca Burger, Amy's Kitchen, Morningstar Farms, Yves Veggie Cuisine, and many others.

Buyer beware: Products labeled "organic" aren't allowed to contain any hexane-derived ingredients, but that rule doesn't apply to foods that are labeled "made with organic ingredients."

And then there are the nitrosamines, hardcore carcinogens which crop up in high concentrations in virtually every commercial soy protein food. In short, unfermented/processed soy comes with a lot of baggage.

MORE PRODUCTS WITH UNFERMENTED SOY

Unless specifically stated as being made from fermented soy, which is extremely rare, soy foods are made from unfermented soy. These include soy milks (Silk,

Soy Dream and Nature's Soy), infant formulas like Earth's Best, and even products that are associated with a back-to-nature, ultra-healthy quality, such as Ezekiel breads.

Unfermented soy also often turns up in meal replacement drinks and bars, weight loss formulas and even Glucerna products for diabetics!

To say that soy is outright ubiquitous isn't an exaggeration; it's also found in: breaded foods and bread crumbs, bean sprouts, baking mixes, peanut butter, seasonings, frozen desserts, gravies, lemonade mixes, canned tuna, chewing gum and much more.

Other names for soy to watch out for: *edamame, bean curd, vegetable protein, textured vegetable protein, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, hydrolyzed plant protein* and *yuba*.

Keep in mind that hexane and nitrosamines may be along for the ride, if you're thinking that "just a little bit of soy" won't hurt.

GMO AND SOY

Only a very small percentage of soybean products available in the U.S. market are non-GMO. If you're committed to non-GMO eating, then soy is out. A most interesting study on GMO and diet was conducted by the Surov's Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Hamsters which were fed a GMO soy diet lost the ability to reproduce, had slow growth and showed a high mortality rate. Though critics will point out that the study involved hamsters, not people, these results are alarming and should make people think good and hard before ingesting GMO soy.

Avoiding unfermented soy is not easy to do and almost requires you to skip soy altogether. However, if you make the effort to obtain traditionally fermented soy products – natto, tempeh and miso, you can enjoy some of the benefits and avoid the steep downside of unfermented soy.

REPLACEMENTS FOR SOY THAT PROMOTE HEALTH

If you've been eating all sorts of soy foods for heart health, colon health, etc., rest assured, there are non-soy foods and supplements that promote heart health, improve cholesterol, are rich in fiber and don't contain saturated fats.

Heart health: wild Alaskan salmon, omega 3 fish oils, green tea/extract, turmeric/extract, garlic and resveratrol supplements, plant sterols, oats, grapes, pomegranate juice, olive oil, nuts and seeds. Read supplement ingredients to make sure they don't contain soy.

For a "meat substitute" that doesn't contain as many saturated fats: grass fed beef and wild game. These animals eat foods that nature designed them to eat, and hence, their meat contains "good" fats and fewer "bad" fats.

Increased fiber intake: lentils, beans, whole grains, whole fruits, whole vegetables, kefir (with inulin), brewer's yeast. Again, read ingredients lists to check for soy.

Breast health: cruciferous vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower, whole fruits especially berries, nuts especially almonds, whey protein powder (no additives) and supplements: indole-3 carbinol, sulforophane, green tea, turmeric and co-Q 10. Check whey protein and supplement ingredients for soy. ☺



WHAT YOU MUST BUY ORGANIC, AND WHAT YOU CAN BUY CONVENTIONALLY

When buying produce it's important to buy local and organic when you can. When that isn't possible, there are some guidelines to pay attention to regarding what foods you really should buy organic and which you can buy conventionally if necessary.

Foods that you absolutely should buy organic include: apples, celery, leafy greens, grapes, bell peppers, peaches, strawberries, nectarines, cherries, kale, carrots and pears. These have the highest levels of pesticides when grown conventionally.

The following foods have thick skins or simply have lower pesticide levels: mangos, watermelon, pineapple, broccoli, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, avocados, onions, sweet corn, asparagus, sweet peas, kiwi, cabbage, eggplant and papaya.

