



soy improves women's health

Soy products are often recommended to help manage menopausal symptoms. But new research indicates much wider benefits for oestrogen-deficient women. According to the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, the daily intake of whole soy foods can reduce key risk factors for cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis, two common causes of death and disability in older women.



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The study involved 42 healthy postmenopausal women who supplemented their usual diets with three servings of soy foods each day for three months.

How much did they eat?

A serving of soy was either 1 cup (250 ml) of soy milk or 10 grams of roasted soy nuts. The women used a mix'n'match approach to make up the three daily servings. The amount was important, in order to achieve an intake of 60 milligrams of isoflavones, which is believed to be the active ingredient.

You could achieve this by substituting soy milk on your breakfast cereal, soy nuts as an afternoon snack or a flavoured soy milk drink after dinner.

What were the results?

High blood levels of isoflavones. This means the isoflavones were being absorbed from the soy foods.

Protection of LDL-cholesterol

(the bad guy) from being oxidised into a harmful form that builds up inside blood vessels. This meant the soy was providing antioxidants.

Increase in levels of HDL-cholesterol (the good guy).

Increase in markers of bone formation and a decrease in markers of bone degradation, which is especially pronounced in women who were losing bone most quickly, as occurs in early menopause!

The take-home message!

While longer-term research is needed to confirm these results, there is already ample evidence that soy foods can make a positive contribution to your health.

I recommend a regular intake of soy foods for younger and older women, men and children, as is the practice in traditional Asian diets.

See **page 28** for a tasty and healthful, soy recipe.

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