

beauty flash



All the latest products to keep you looking good, by Olivia Morgan

fantastic elastics

>> **Gliders**
Snag Free Hair
Elastics are smooth all the way round, so your hair won't get caught while you style. In assorted colours (including clear), a 24-pack starts at \$3.95. Available from K-mart, salons and chemists.



what's the fuzz



>> Is your hair dry, frizzy or colour-treated? Try Correctives Shampoo and Shiner and Glistening Crème Conditioner, \$15.65 each, from John Freida. Call 1800 251 215.

the brush off

>> With every hairbrush purchase from the **Hairs and Graces** range of hair accessories, 10 cents will go to ovarian cancer research. You'll find them at selected pharmacies and supermarkets.



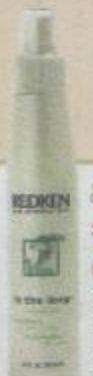
stress head

>> Stress can affect your scalp and hair. **Kerastase Dermo-Calm** range frees the scalp from sensitivity and stress, to leave hair looking good and, er, calm. The range starts at \$23.65. Call 1300 365 552.



a curly one

>> New from Redken is **The Loop Curl Booster**, \$19, to enhance and revitalise naturally curly or textured hair. Farewell to frizz. From Redken stockists nationally. Call 1300 650 170.



tree of life

Clever compounds called phytoestrogens – found in plants – protect us from cancer. Well, they would – if only we'd eat enough of them. By **Bronwen Gora**.

While medicine races to find cures for cancer, perhaps the biggest breakthrough has been made on the prevention front. It's been found that those who eat phytoestrogen-rich foods suffer significantly less from cancers and other diseases than those whose diets have low levels of this chemical compound.

"If we're deficient in phytoestrogens, we're leaving ourselves open to diseases," says nutritionist Sue Radd. "Basically, they switch off the key enzymes that are involved in the cancer process."

We've known for some time now that those who eat a non-typical western diet – one high in natural foods and low in processed oils and sugars – are less prone to cancers and other ailments. But we haven't known why. Phytoestrogens seem to be the principal answer.

phyto what, exactly?

So far, phytoestrogens have been found to reduce the risk of breast cancer, prostate cancer, heart disease and stroke, osteoporosis, menopausal symptoms, brain diseases (such as Alzheimer's), alcoholism and inflammatory diseases (such as rheumatoid arthritis). They also help to keep bones strong by stimulating the growth of new bone.

What are phytoestrogens? They're

why broc rocks

■ Broccoli – a vegetable that evokes equal measures of love and loathing – is one of the best cancer-fighting foods you can eat.

According to researchers, a compound that helps give broccoli its distinctive taste also kills the *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria, which is blamed for most cases of stomach cancer. The next step is to see if people can cure themselves of *helicobacter* by eating broccoli and broccoli sprouts, say researchers at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the French National Scientific Research Centre.

Antibiotics can kill *helicobacter* and prevent stomach cancer, but they are expensive and have side effects, which include killing off "good" bacteria that help the body to digest food.



soy sources

instead of	try
dairy milk	soy milk
dairy fruit yoghurt	soy fruit yoghurt
cream cheese	silken tofu
mustard	soy mustard
sour cream	plain soy yoghurt
ricotta cheese	firm tofu, mashed
smoked cheese	smoked tofu
wheat flour	soy flour
stock cube	miso
chicken fillet	slice of firm tofu or ready-made soy fillet/vegetal
mince meat	rehydrated textured vegetable protein (TVP)
bulgar wheat	soy grits



worry, because the later you start eating a phytoestrogen-rich diet, the less protected you are.

Plant and natural foods provide the readiest source. But soy protein is the richest source of phytoestrogen – so include tofu in your diet. Linseed is the other richest source, with wholegrain cereals and breads, nuts, vegetables and legumes such as soybeans, kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas coming just behind.

Phytoestrogens are not present in meat or dairy – but that doesn't mean we shouldn't eat them, Radd says. Balancing your diet with phytoestrogen-rich foods can work wonders for your body's levels.

While it's best to start eating a phytoestrogen-rich diet while young, it's possible to boost phytoestrogens in your blood within days of changing your diet.

Radd and Setchell made a study of Duncan, a 22-year-old university student who had eaten scarcely a piece of fruit or a vegetable in his life. His diet was high in animal protein, saturated fats, biscuits, chocolate and other junk food. Duncan followed the Eat To Live guidelines for three days and found his phytoestrogen levels increased more than 10,000 times.

evidence stacks up



Dr Setchell was the first to draw the link between the phytoestrogen-rich diet of Asians and their low rates of cancers and cardiovascular disease.

They derive their rich supplies from soy foods and a largely vegetarian diet.

The Japanese have 30 to 100 times more phytoestrogens in their blood than Europeans and Americans. This is cited as the reason only five per cent of Japanese women report hot flushes linked to menopause – compared with 85 per cent of Australian women. The Mediterranean diet – rich in vegetables, fruit, legumes, nuts, grain and olive oil – is also jam-packed with phytoestrogens.

Soy milk is also a star player. A study of American men who drank soy milk more than once a day found reductions in prostate cancer rates of 70 per cent. Why? Researchers believe phytoestrogens in soy foods inhibit the enzyme in the prostate gland that turns testosterone into the cancer-causing hormone DHT.

"In Asian countries, they give children tofu at four to six months," Radd says. "And we've found that when Asians move to the west and change their diet, it takes two to three generations for them to lose their protection from cancers and other diseases."

estrogen-like molecules found in plants that balance out the effects of the oestrogen hormone (remember that men also have oestrogen in their bodies). Oestrogen imbalances are responsible for a variety of illnesses.

"We know that phytoestrogens can 'dock' like a ship at the oestrogen receptors in the body," Radd explains. "But the cargo they carry is different. Sometimes they'll work like oestrogen; other times they'll balance it out."

And, according to a new book, *Eat To Live* (Hodder Headline) by Radd and Dr Kenneth Setchell – a US researcher who was the first to identify phytoestrogens – the balancing effect of phytoestrogens on oestrogen can also help to stop the spread of cancer. "Oestrogen stimulates prostate cancer to grow once you have it," Radd says.

These wonder workers have also been found to block the effects of xenoestrogens, the harmful chemical industry by-products found in everything from plastic food containers to our drinking water. Soy phytoestrogens, for example, stop several pesticides from stimulating breast cancer cells, while other tests have found that they also block the highly poisonous pesticide dioxin from binding to a receptor in the body.

Some food makers now include phytoestrogen contents on labels, knowing that it will become a major selling point. Blackmores markets a phytoestrogen powder that can be added to most foods and drinks.

where do you get it?

But, guess what? Australians are eating only a few milligrams of phytoestrogens each day.

And that, says Radd, is a major



diet rater

How much phytoestrogen do you eat?

■ How often do you have soy milk?
 a) Every day on my cereal or I simply drink it.
 b) Occasionally.
 c) Never, ever. Erk ...

■ How often do you eat soybeans or food made from soybeans – such as tofu, soy burgers, soy hot dogs, soy luncheon slices, soy nuts or green soybeans?
 a) Three or more times a week.
 b) Twice a week.
 c) Never, ever. Bleah ...

■ How many servings of wholemeal or wholegrain foods do you eat a day? A serve is either a bowl of cereal or a slice of wholegrain bread or half a cup of cooked brown rice or wholemeal pasta.
 a) Three or more.
 b) Usually two.
 c) None. Spilt ...



■ How many pieces of fruit do you eat a day?
 a) Two or more pieces each day.
 b) One or two pieces, usually.
 c) Hopefully, none. Yergh ...

■ How many serves of vegetables do you eat a day? A serve equals half a cup of cooked vegetables or a cup of salad.
 a) At least two or more cups of cooked vegetables each day.
 b) I have a few vegies with dinner – maybe a cup.
 c) Maybe a few vegies every few days. Preferably none. Yuk ...

■ How often do you eat linseeds or linseed meal or legumes or beans – for example, chickpeas, lentils, red kidney beans, navy beans or food prepared from these, such as hummus or dhal?
 a) Three or more times each and every week.
 b) Twice a week.
 c) How about never. Blargh ...

mostly As Your phytoestrogen levels should be on a high.

mostly Bs You're doing well, but probably not well enough. You'd do well to get some more soy products into you.

mostly Cs Your phytoestrogen levels are probably negligible, so consider changing to a more natural plant-based diet.

phytoestrogen-rich foods



Get stuck into some ...

- soy anything – milk, yoghurt, cheese and especially tofu.
- soybeans and green soybean miso (a soybean paste often used for soup).
- legumes (chickpeas, lentils and beans – black, kidney, navy, lima, blackeyed and pinto).
- nuts and seeds (eat raw nuts rather than those that are salted or oil-roasted).
- linseeds.

- fruit (pears, plums, berries, bananas, apples, citrus fruits and rockmelon are particularly rich in phytoestrogens).
- vegetables (particularly broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, capsicum, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, garlic, onion and tomato).
- wholegrain anything (bread, muffins, crackers, pasta) and try soy and linseed bread.
- bran (barley, oat, wheat, rye and rice).

... and try these for delicious phytoestrogen-rich snacks:

- green soybeans (edamame).
- sweet-tasting soy nuts.
- soy fruit yoghurt.
- flavoured soy drinks.
- soy ice-cream.
- soy protein bars.
- fresh fruit.
- nuts and seeds.
- grainy seeded bread or muffins (particularly if they're made with linseeds).

