

THE LIGHTER SIDE

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SOY SOY
GOOD!



According to statistics by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), diabetes is a leading cause of death among women. Women with Type 2 diabetes are almost 10 times more likely to have heart disease and women with Type 1 diabetes have an increased risk of miscarriage or having a baby with malformations. However, up to 70% of cases of Type 2 diabetes by 2040 could be prevented through lifestyle interventions.

Reserachers have identified the molecular pathway that allows foods rich in soy bioactive compounds called isoflavones to lower diabetes and heart disease risk. Eating soy foods has been shown to lower cholesterol, decrease blood glucose levels and improve glucose tolerance in people with diabetes.

Soy protein, a good source of polyunsaturated fatty acid, helps bring down triglyceride levels and LDL, which is viewed as important for reducing chronic heart disease. 85% of the fat in soybeans are unsaturated. Omega-6 is the predominant fatty acid in soybeans, 55% and Omega-3 in soybean is around 6%. American Heart Association advocates that consuming soy protein to replace animal foods rich in saturated fats may prove beneficial to heart health. Soybeans contain a mix of slow-digesting carbohydrates that help control the blood sugar.

Genistein, a predominant isoflavone in soybean, may have antioxidant properties that inhibit the growth of cancer cells. Isoflavones in soybean also help reduce the bone loss and increase the bone mineral density during menopause.

Soy is also gut-friendly. The fibre along with the starches promote the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut. The iron and zinc in soybean are easily absorbed by the body compared to other vegetarian sources. Zinc is needed for the growth and development of cells.

The purest form of soy is edamame—soybeans usually served in their pod. They're good in salads or by themselves. So, go for organic edamame and tofu, tempeh, and miso. Take note that one serving equals 1 cup (240ml) of soymilk, 1 cup edamame (155g) and ½ cup of tofu (130g)

Edamame contains protein, calcium, vitamin C, folate, choline iron, and zinc. Like meat and dairy products, it provides all essential amino acids. Folate and iron in edamame promote the fertility in pregnant women. Edamame is also a good source of choline that plays a vital role in muscle functioning, learning, memory and promotes good sleep.



Tofu, which is nicknamed 'meat without bone' is made by curdling the soymilk. Firm tofu is higher in protein. Soft tofu is used in recipes which call for blended tofu, and silken tofu is a good replacement for sour cream in dip recipes. Yuba, a thin layer or sheet, formed above the hot soymilk, is high in protein.



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Tempeh, is an Indonesian food with a nutty flavour. Whole soy bean fermented with rice or millet to form a chunky soybean cake. It can be marinated and grilled and added to soups and salads. Protein in tempeh is good for diabetic patients who often have problems with animal protein sources. Protein and fiber in tempeh can also prevent the rise in blood sugar and keep blood sugar levels under control.



References

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<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

About the author: Kohila Govindaraju is an accredited nutritionist and director of THE BERRIES Nutrition Consulting, an avid blogger (kohilag.wordpress.com) and prolific author of magazine articles on food and nutrition, including a book titled How to Lose Weight Without Hunger published by PatientsEngage.

SOY PRODUCTS

Soy yoghurt contains healthy bacteria and is fortified with calcium and vitamin D. People with diabetes need to manage high blood sugar. Consuming low glycaemic foods, such as soy yoghurt, helps you to control your blood sugar levels because you slowly absorb sugar from these foods into your blood. Choose plain soy yoghurt with no sugar added.

Soy cheese made from soymilk, is creamy in texture and makes an easy substitute for the most fatty cheeses and sour cream. It comes in various flavours, too. While dairy cheese contains between 180 calories per ounce, soy cheese contains between 50 and 80 calories. Furthermore, soy cheese is low in fat and is cholesterol-free, making it a good weight loss food. Soy cheese contains less sodium than dairy cheese, and the sodium is often of a higher quality (many soy cheese manufacturers enhance their product with sea salt, which is often unrefined and contains many of the trace minerals lacking in the table salt beloved by commercial dairy cheese manufacturers).