

staying HEALTHY



HORIZON
HEALTH

The benefits of soy

As some see it, soy offers many health benefits. Aside from being affordable, it is a complete source of protein that is rich in nutrients and low in calories.

Soy is a plant. Its beans (soybeans) are used to make tofu, soy milk, soy burgers, soy sauce, and more. It is added to many prepared foods, including breads, breakfast cereals, and energy bars. It is also available as a protein supplement.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, adding more plant protein to a diet has clear cardiovascular benefits, such as lowering blood pressure. Soy foods are naturally cholesterol-free, low in saturated fat, and enriched with vitamin B 12, calcium, and vitamin D. Soy can be a good source of protein for vegans and vegetarians who do not consume animal proteins, which are high in saturated fat and cholesterol.

Soy and breast cancer

One topic of discussion is soy's relationship to breast cancer.

Soy contains high amounts of isoflavones, estrogen-like compounds found in plants, which can have similar qualities

to the female hormone estrogen. Lab studies have shown that isoflavones can sometimes act like estrogen and promote tumor growth. At other times, they act against the effects of estrogen.

According to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, eating moderate amounts of soy foods "very likely does not increase the risk of breast cancer." The Mayo Clinic agrees that consuming moderate amounts of soy (one to two servings per day) does not increase the risk of breast cancer, or even other cancers.

Additionally, research shows that eating soy at higher levels typically seen in Asian countries may lower the risk of breast cancer, according to the Komen Foundation. Research also indicates that eating moderate levels of soy may lower the risk of recurrence and mortality in breast cancer survivors.

The Komen Foundation concludes that moderate amounts of soy are safe to eat and can be part of an overall healthy diet. In moderation, soy can be part of a healthy meal plan that focuses on more plant-based foods and less red meat.

Kara Wilcoxon, MS, RDN, LDN

Kara is a registered dietitian and nutritionist and the nutritional services manager at Horizon Health.



In the Paris Clinic, she provides nutritional counseling to patients who are referred to her by healthcare providers. She also provides individual nutrition counseling by appointment. At Paris Community Hospital, she performs rounding activities where she visits patients and conducts follow-up visits regarding their diet and nutrition needs.

Kara has a bachelor's of science degree in family and consumer sciences with an emphasis in dietetics from Eastern Illinois University (EIU). She also has a master's degree in nutrition and dietetics from EIU.

Kara is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and president of the Eastern Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She also is a member of Bee Well of Edgar County. Kara is originally from Rantoul and currently resides in Charleston.

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Is soy bad for men?

If soy contains a substance similar to the female hormone estrogen, is it safe for men to consume?

Soy contains high amounts of isoflavones, a subgroup of phytoestrogens, which are estrogen-like compounds found in plants that can have similar qualities to the female hormone estrogen (see front page article). Men naturally have a certain amount of estrogen in their bodies in addition to the male hormone testosterone.

But men who fear that soy products may contribute to female characteristics can rest easier knowing that numerous scientific studies refute that claim.

According to studies published by the National Institutes of Health, neither soy nor isoflavones lowers testosterone levels or raises estrogen levels in men. In some of the studies, the equivalent of as much as six servings of soy per day did not result in any hormonal disturbances. The International Society for Sexual Medicine adds to the argument that soy does not raise or lower a man's testosterone levels.

As it relates to male fertility, the Soy Nutrition Institute states that initial research that once linked soy to lower sperm counts was later disproved. The same research group later concluded that soy intake in men was unrelated to clinical outcomes among couples attending a fertility clinic.

The National Institutes of Health points to the benefits of soy for men. Among them is research that suggests soy may reduce the risk of prostate cancer, the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in men.

When it comes to resistance exercise training, such as weight lifting, soy protein promotes muscle mass and strength to a similar extent as whey protein, which is considered to be the gold standard in the weight-lifting community, according to the Soy Nutrition Institute.

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER Community Health Programs

VOLUNTEERS' CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE November 8 & 9

» The open house is November 8, from 9 am to 5 pm, and November 9, from 9 am to 4 pm, in Conference Room B. The event is sponsored by the PCH Volunteers, who staff the gift shop and support hospital projects and healthcare scholarships for area students.

ANNUAL DINNER FUNDRAISER November 10

» "Fabulous 40's" is this year's theme. Social hour is 6 to 7 pm, with dinner at 7 pm. Eveland Gym will be turned into the Rainbow Room. A 16-piece big band from Terre Haute will provide entertainment. Proceeds will be used toward an underwater treadmill for the Rehabilitation Services Department. Seating is limited. Call Cindy Belt at 217-466-4734.

NURSE PRACTITIONERS WEEK November 11-17

» Horizon Health encourages everyone to thank their nurse practitioners for the valuable service they provide to the community. Nurse practitioners at Horizon Health include: Casey Anderson, APRN, FNP; Susan Arp, APRN, FNP; Ann Bogue, APRN, FNP; Mallory Cook, APRN, FNP; Carrie Cunningham, APRN, FNP; Debbie Griffin, APRN, FNP, CDE; Angela Hamilton, APRN, FNP; Danielle Ireland, APRN, FNP; Tory Keefer, APRN, FNP; Donna Kerns, APRN, FNP; Michelle Miller, APRN, FNP; Charlene Moore, APRN, FNP; Sara Spesard, APRN, FNP; Tiffany Turner, APRN, FNP; Samantha Volstorf, APRN, FNP; Paige Wampler, APRN, FNP; Crystal White, APRN, FNP; and Joy Williams, APRN, FNP.

MONTHLY HEALTH SCREENINGS November 13

» Blood sugar, blood pressure, and lipid panel (HDL, LDL, and triglycerides) screenings, 7 to 9 am. Fasting for eight hours in advance required. Cost is \$25. Call 217-466-4228.

VOLUNTEERS' CHOCOLATE SALE December 3 & 4

» The PCH Volunteers will hold their South Bend Chocolate Company sale from 8 am to 4 pm by the rotunda entrance to the Paris Clinic.