Still Unsure About Soy?

Here’s what we know about this versatile, nutrient-rich plant food.

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Many soy products are touted as healthy foods. But findings from research in recent years suggest that soy may not be as good for folks as previously thought.

Studies report that this protein derived from soybeans can affect a person’s health in numerous ways, from promoting the growth of cancerous cells to curing high cholesterol.

So is soy good or bad for you? Here’s what scientists know so far. Soy doesn’t increase breast cancer risk and may actually help lower the chances of developing some cancers. In addition, soy can reduce hot flashes and protect heart health and has been linked to improved fertility.

But diets high in soy can affect ovarian function. What’s more, doctors advise people with thyroid problems to watch their intake because too much of this animal protein substitute can increase the risk of hypothyroidism.

To incorporate this popular food into meal plans, experts suggest that folks eat moderate amounts of minimally processed, non–genetically modified organic soy products, such as tofu, tempeh, miso and edamame.

Nutritionists say three to five servings of soy each week should be OK. Those unsure about how much soy to eat or who suffer from underlying health conditions should consult with their doctors.

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