

# MYTHS & FACTS

*Soyfoods may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease<sup>[1-3]</sup>, osteoporosis<sup>[4-6]</sup> and some forms of cancer.<sup>[7]</sup> However, unsubstantiated myths exist.*



Consumers report eating more soyfoods in part because of research suggesting **they offer health benefits** and increased interest in plant-based diets. <sup>[1-7]</sup>

**MYTH:**  
MEN EXPERIENCE  
FEMINIZING EFFECTS  
FROM SOY

**FACT:** The vast majority of studies have shown no effects on circulating reproductive hormone levels in men in response to intakes of soy protein and isoflavones.<sup>[8, 9]</sup> In addition, a comprehensive review of the clinical research found no evidence that isoflavone exposure affects circulating estrogen levels in men.<sup>[10]</sup>

Post-diagnosis soy intake **improves the prognosis** of breast cancer patients.



**MYTH:**  
SOY INCREASES  
BREAST CANCER  
RISK

**FACT:** Human data indicate that isoflavones, regardless of the source, do not exert harmful effects on breast tissue. The estrogen-like effects of isoflavones form the theoretical basis for concern that soyfoods are contraindicated for women who are at increased risk of breast cancer and women with estrogen-sensitive breast cancer; however the evidence indicates this concern is unfounded.<sup>[11-15]</sup>

Possible **soy benefits** include reduced risk of osteoporosis & some cancers.<sup>[4-7]</sup>

## **MYTH:** SOY ALLERGIES ARE MORE COMMON THAN OTHER FOOD ALLERGIES

**FACT:** Cow's milk allergy is about 40 times more common than soy allergy.<sup>[16]</sup> For children with soy allergies, an estimated 70% of children will outgrow it by age 10.<sup>[17]</sup> Consequently, it is estimated that by that age, only approximately 1 out of 1,000 children are allergic to soy. A common effect of soy allergy is eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE), a chronic inflammatory disorder of the esophagus, although this condition is much less commonly associated with soy than with other common food allergies.<sup>[18]</sup>

**Soy milk intake is significantly inversely related to osteoporosis.**<sup>[25]</sup>

## **MYTH:** SOYFOODS ADVERSELY AFFECT THYROID FUNCTION

**FACT:** A comprehensive review found that the totality of the evidence showed that neither soyfoods nor isoflavones adversely affect thyroid function in healthy men or women.<sup>[19]</sup> Studies published since this review are supportive of the conclusion.<sup>[20-24]</sup>

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