

Soy Isoflavones Shown to Help Breast Cell Health

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Link – <http://www.nowfoods.com/HealthLibrary/HealthArticles/WeeklyNewsletter/M101343.htm>

Described as "common, non-cancerous changes in the tissue of the breast", fibrocystic breast disease is estimated to occur in over 60% of women¹. While by itself it is not cancerous, fibrocystic breast disease may increase the risk of breast cancer by as much as 5 times^(2, 3). As a result, finding ways to help maintain breast cell health even when fibrocystic breast disease occurs is an important issue.

Now a new study⁴ has found that increasing soy isoflavone intake may help women maintain breast cell health.

In the study, 196 women diagnosed with breast cancer and 304 women with a benign breast condition were compared with 1,002 women with no known breast disease who were selected from a randomized trial of breast self-examination in China⁵. The patients provided blood samples during the study which the researchers used to measure two soy isoflavones, genistein and daidzein.

The researchers found that blood levels of soy isoflavones were inversely related to the risk of breast disease. Specifically, those with the highest blood levels of genistein and daidzein (more than 76.95 nanomoles per liter) had a 74% decreased risk of breast cancer and 60% decreased risk of benign breast conditions.

Because "circulating daidzein and genistein concentrations were significantly higher in controls than in cases with fibrocystic breast conditions or breast cancer", the researchers concluded that "[soy isoflavone intake] was inversely associated with fibrocystic breast conditions and breast cancer, and the results suggest that effects on cancer risk occur early in carcinogenesis."

Greg Arnold is a Chiropractic Physician practicing in Danville, CA. You can contact Dr. Arnold directly by emailing him at PitchingDoc@msn.com or visiting his web site at www.PitchingDoc.com

Reference:

¹ "Fibrocystic Breast Disease" posted on www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000912.htm

² Schnitt SJ, Connolly JL. Pathology of benign breast disorders. 2nd ed. In: Harris JR, Lippman ME, Morrow M, Osborne CK, editors. *Diseases of the breast*. Philadelphia (PA): Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins; 2000. p. 75–93

³ Hartmann LC, Sellers TA, Frost MH, et al. Benign breast disease and the risk of breast cancer. *N Engl J Med* 2005;353:229–37

⁴ Lampe JW. Plasma Isoflavones and Fibrocystic Breast Conditions and Breast Cancer Among Women in Shanghai, China. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev* 2007 16: 2579-2586 doi: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-07-0368

⁵ Thomas DB, Gao DL, Ray RM, et al. Randomized trial of breast self-examination in Shanghai: final results. *J Natl Cancer Inst* 2002;94:1445–57