

soy made simple

The real story behind the little green bean

by Marygrace Taylor

There aren't many foods with a reputation as murky as soy's. The versatile bean is often touted as a miracle food, but has also come under fire for being a heavily processed ingredient that could be harmful for kids and adults. Which is it? Here's what you need to know about feeding soy to your family.

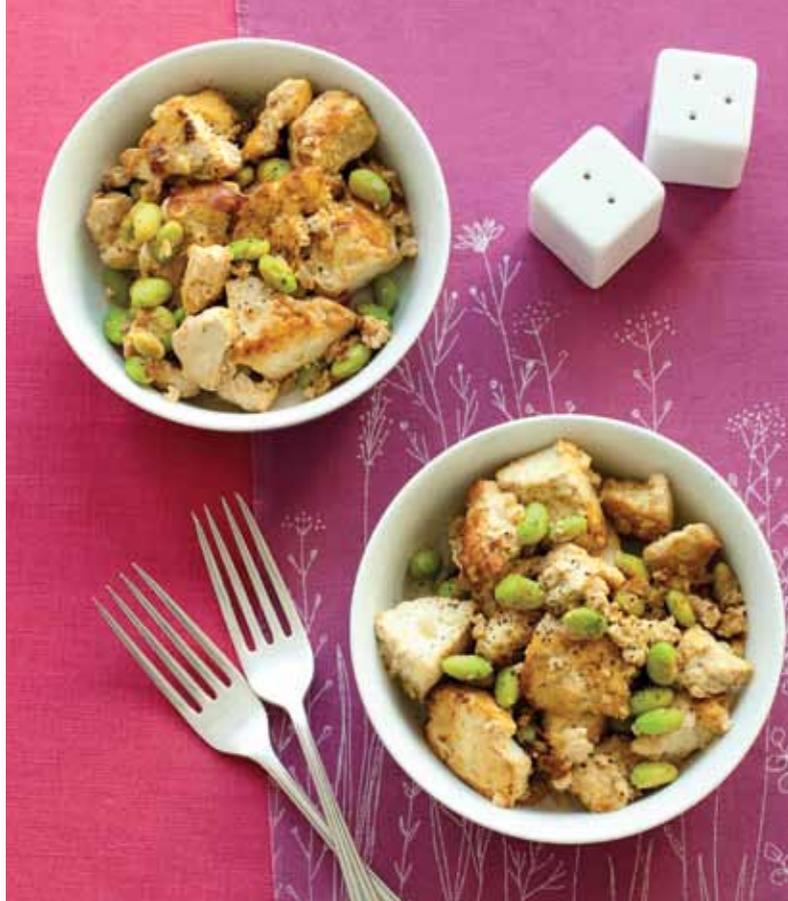
Good soy, bad soy

Like other good-for-you foods, soy exists on a spectrum. "Saying that soy is unhealthy is like saying apples are unhealthy because they can be turned into apple pie," says Andy Bellatti, R.D., a Seattle-based nutritionist. High in protein, soybeans are used to make foods like tofu, soymilk, soy sauce, tempeh (a fermented soy cake), miso (a salty, fermented soy paste), and natto (fermented soybeans). These whole foods contain beneficial antioxidant compounds called isoflavones, as well as fiber, B vitamins, and omega-3 fatty acids. They might also be healthful for what they *don't* contain: Whole soy foods are low in saturated fat and are cholesterol-free—so swapping them for some of the animal protein in your diet may reduce your risk for heart disease.

But soy also comes in more processed forms. Soy protein isolate, a highly refined soy protein, is used as a filler in packaged foods ranging from cereal to meat products, while fast food is often fried in soybean oil. "Ingredients like these are soy byproducts, and they don't contain the healthful nutrients of whole soy," Bellatti says. "When negative claims are made about soy, they usually have to do with soy in these forms."

Dispelling the myths

Healthy as they are, even whole soyfoods can be a cause for concern. Those isoflavones are plant versions of the hormone estrogen, which has led some



tofu edamame scramble

Intimidated by cooking with tofu? Try scrambling it! This recipe is more flavorful than scrambled eggs and packs a bigger protein punch, but still feels right at home on the breakfast table. Nutritional yeast is a yellow, cheesy-tasting yeast that's rich in B vitamins; find it in the supplement or bulk sections of natural food stores.

Active time: 25 minutes **Total time:** 25 minutes

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| 2 tablespoons olive oil | Juice of ½ lemon |
| ½ medium yellow onion, diced | 16 ounces firm tofu, drained and crumbled |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | 1 cup shelled edamame, thawed if frozen |
| 2½ tablespoons soy sauce | Salt and pepper, to taste |
| 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast | |
| 1 tablespoon tahini | |

1. Warm the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until softened, 5 to 7 minutes.
2. While they cook, combine the soy sauce, nutritional yeast, tahini, and lemon juice in a medium bowl and mix well. Add the tofu and toss to combine.
3. Adjust the heat to medium high and add the tofu mixture to the skillet. Use a spatula to spread the mixture evenly over the surface of the pan, and let cook for 2 to 3 minutes without stirring. Use the spatula to flip the tofu mixture over and cook 2 to 3 more minutes. Continue until most of the tofu has browned and is beginning to appear crisp, about 10 to 12 minutes total.
4. Add the edamame, salt, and pepper, and cook 2 more minutes. Serve hot.

Serves 4

Per serving: calories 224, fat 17 g, protein 21 g, carbohydrates 13 g, dietary fiber 4 g

experts to worry that consuming too much could cause reproductive problems in boys and early puberty for girls. But the clinical evidence isn't there, says Bridget Swinney, R.D., the author of several family nutrition books, including *Healthy Food for Healthy Kids*. One major analysis concluded that consuming soy has no effect on male testosterone levels. Other recent research says girls (and boys as well) who eat high amounts of plant protein, like soy or other kinds of beans, actually tend to go through puberty later than those who eat high amounts of animal protein.

The one issue that still isn't so clear is soy's relationship to breast cancer. Some experts believe that the estrogen-like compounds found in soy may be harmful to breast cancer survivors, though a large-scale study last year found no connection. The new research isn't definitive, though.

Adding soy to your family's diet

For kids and adults, eating 25 grams of soy protein a day is not only safe—it's good for you, says Swinney. The key is choosing whole soy foods like tempeh, tofu, or edamame, instead of more processed products like soy protein powder or soy-based meat alternative. For formula-fed babies, a soy-based formula is perfectly safe as well, Swinney says.

WHAT ABOUT GMOS?

A whopping 94 percent of soybeans grown in the U.S. are genetically modified. Choosing certified organic soy used to ensure that it was also GMO-free—but since testing isn't mandatory, some organic soy could contain GMOs. That's because genetically engineered crops can accidentally cross-pollinate with organic ones if the two varieties are grown in close proximity. (Learn more about this issue at kiwimagonline.com/gmosoy.) To be safe, choose soy foods that are organic and certified GMO-free. (Look for a label from the Non-GMO Project, a third-party verifier.)

lemon herb tempeh

If your family is trying to cut back on animal products but still wants a hearty source of protein, try tempeh. Its rich flavor and chewy texture is sure to satisfy a meat-and-potatoes-loving crowd.

Active time: 10 minutes **Total time:** 55 minutes

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| ½ cup low-sodium vegetable broth | 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme |
| ⅓ cup lemon juice | 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano |
| ¼ cup olive oil | 2 cloves garlic, sliced |
| 2 tablespoons soy sauce | 2 8-ounce packages tempeh, each sliced into 8 pieces |
| 1 tablespoon honey | |

1. In a medium bowl, add the vegetable broth, lemon juice, olive oil, soy sauce, honey, thyme, oregano, and garlic. Whisk to combine.
2. Add the tempeh pieces to the bowl, tossing gently to coat all sides in the marinade liquid. Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour, or as long as overnight.
3. Remove the tempeh from the marinade and place on a baking sheet. Transfer the marinade to a small saucepan over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes, or until the liquid has thickened slightly. Remove from the heat and strain liquid.
4. Preheat the broiler, and broil the tempeh for 7 to 8 minutes, or until golden brown around the edges. Pour the sauce over the tempeh and serve hot.

Serves 4

Per serving: calories 367, fat 26 g, protein 22 g, carbohydrates 18 g, dietary fiber 1 g



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