



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Soy

This information describes the common uses of Soy, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

What is it?

Soybeans are rich in protein and other important nutrients. Soy is found in foods such as tofu, miso, soy sauce, and tempeh. It contains large amounts of substances known as isoflavones that help treat hot flashes and lower high cholesterol. Isoflavones can also help prevent cancer.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Soy may be useful for:

- Preventing cancer
- Preventing heart disease
- Lowering high cholesterol
- Preventing bone loss
- Managing symptoms caused by menopause (permanent end of menstrual cycles), such as hot flashes

Soy also has other uses that haven't been studied by doctors to see if they

work.

It's generally safe to use soy in food. Talk with your healthcare providers before taking supplements or higher amounts of soy. Herbal supplements are stronger than the herbs you would use in cooking.

Supplements can also interact with some medications and affect how they work. For more information, read the "What else do I need to know?" section below.

What are the side effects?

Side effects of using soy may include:

- Gas
- Allergic reactions, such as rashes or hives

What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking tamoxifen (such as Nolvadex® or Soltamox™). Soy supplements can affect how it works.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking aromatase inhibitors. Aromatase inhibitors are medications that stop an enzyme called aromatase from changing other hormones into estrogen. Some examples of aromatase inhibitors include letrozole (Femara®) and anastrozole (Arimidex®).

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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