

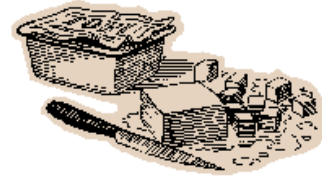


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*Healthy choices for people and pets*

## Is Soy Really a Health Food?

*by Margaret Auld-Louie*

Most people assume the answer to this question is "yes" and that is what most of the mainstream media tells us. Based on the research we have done, we feel the answer is "no". This is an important question to ask because soy is everywhere in processed foods today, even pet foods. You do not have to be a vegetarian or health food "nut" that eats soy substitutes for dairy and meat, to have a lot of soy in your diet. Soy is a hidden ingredient found in many processed foods. It is used to extend fast food hamburgers, added to most supermarket breads and found in many dry kibble pet foods, even the premium brands. You will find even higher levels of it in the foods in health food stores, where it is promoted as a heart-healthy, cancer-preventing, menopause-alleviating ingredient.



Sources that promote soy assert that Asians have eaten "tons of soy" for millennia. If you search the Internet for "soybeans", you can find statements such as "soybeans have been a major source of protein for people in Asia for more than 5,000 years". However, according to the extensively researched book, The Whole Soy Story: the dark side of America's favorite health food, by Kaayla T. Daniel, PhD, CCN, (this month's Book of the Month), the Chinese first started eating soybeans about 2,500 years ago, after they figured out how to ferment it. Somehow, the ancient Chinese knew that soybeans still contain many toxins after cooking and thus avoiding eating it until they learned to neutralize those toxins through fermentation. And in traditional Asian diets, soy is only used in small amounts as a condiment, with pork, seafood and other animals providing the bulk of the protein. Only very recently has soy been eaten the way we typically eat it, consuming large amounts in an unfermented and often highly processed form. Soy was originally considered an inedible plant, used to fix nitrogen in the soil. Even today you can find people from farming families who remember that as the primary use of soy.

Tofu was first used in monasteries in China about 2,000 years ago, in part to promote sexual abstinence, since the phytoestrogens in soy can lower testosterone levels (so maybe there really is something to the saying that "real men don't eat tofu"). Except in times of famine, tofu was only used as a condiment, with pork, seafood and other forms of protein being preferred. The Japanese probably started eating miso (which is fermented) about 1,500 years ago. Tempeh (another fermented soy food) was not invented until after 1,000 AD when soy came to Indonesia, and it was considered a food for the poor. Most Asians eat only small amounts of fermented soy products (miso, tempeh or soy sauce) as a condiment, and the Japanese typically combine it with fish broth and seaweed that naturally contains iodine, helping offset the thyroid-



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suppressing effects of soy. Soybean milk was never used historically by Asians to feed their children and soy formula was not invented in China until 1928. The soy milk we drink today is a highly processed food, full of the toxins that naturally occur in soy as well as additives to make it palatable, and not the "health food" it is promoted to be. If you can't tolerate pasteurized cow's milk (which is also not a healthy food), we suggest looking for a source of raw milk or even raw goat's milk (as goat's milk is much easier to digest).

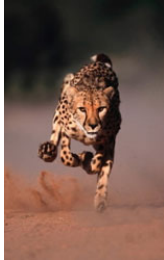
As Americans, we eat soy mostly in unfermented forms, made into various processed imitation foods such as burgers, sausages, TVP chili, soymilk, soy cheese, and soy ice cream, as well as consuming large amounts of "hidden" soy flour, protein and oil in most processed foods. So, what is the problem with eating all this soy? Isn't soy good for us? Many doctors, including holistic doctor Andrew Weil, promote it. Dr. Weil even partners with a pet food brand containing soy that is marketed as a high-end super premium food, sold in health food stores and natural pet stores. Unfortunately, consumption of soy can create many health issues, both in humans and animals. Following are some of the major problems caused by soy, as described by the Weston Price Foundation on their website:

- High levels of phytic acid in soy reduce assimilation of calcium, magnesium, copper, iron and zinc. Phytic acid in soy is not neutralized by ordinary preparation methods such as soaking, sprouting and long, slow cooking. High phytate diets have caused growth problems in children.
- Trypsin inhibitors in soy interfere with protein digestion and may cause pancreatic disorders. In test animals soy containing trypsin inhibitors caused stunted growth.
- Soy phytoestrogens disrupt endocrine function and have the potential to cause infertility and to promote breast cancer in adult women.
- Soy phytoestrogens are potent antithyroid agents that cause hypothyroidism and may cause thyroid cancer. In infants, consumption of soy formula has been linked to autoimmune thyroid disease.
- Vitamin B12 analogs in soy are not absorbed and actually increase the body's requirement for B12.
- Soy foods increase the body's requirement for vitamin D.
- Fragile proteins are denatured during high temperature processing to make soy protein isolate and textured vegetable protein.
- Processing of soy protein results in the formation of toxic lysinoalanine and highly carcinogenic nitrosamines.
- Free glutamic acid or MSG, a potent neurotoxin, is formed during soy food processing and additional amounts are added to many soy foods.
- Soy foods contain high levels of aluminum which is toxic to the nervous system and the kidneys.



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What all this scientific information boils down to is that soy can really screw up your body and your health. To understand this in human terms, all you have to do is read some of the stories of people whose health has been damaged by soy. You can find these stories in the book The Whole Soy Story as well as the letters to the editor in nearly every edition of Wise Traditions, the quarterly journal published by the Weston Price Foundation. The Weston Price Foundation is actually considering filing a class action lawsuit on behalf of the many people that have been harmed physically and medically by soy. Following is a typical story, reported in The Whole Soy Story book from someone in Boulder, Colorado:



*"I am a healthy 48-year-old woman. An avid runner, I have followed primarily a vegetarian diet for over five years, and have always had excellent blood chemistry results...Last year, however, I added something significant to my regular diet of fruits, vegetables, beans and grains: soy products. I followed the conventional wisdom that this would alleviate early menopausal symptoms, keep my heart healthy, etc. I ate tofu daily, consumed soy milk in abundance, snacked on soy nuts...and looked for soy isoflavones in my supplements. Results: I now am facing surgery for a goiter (enlarged thyroid)...I have symptoms of thyroid damage. My skin, nails, hair are all suffering visibly. I have chest pain when I run. Worst of all my cholesterol has risen from 137 to 210 in the last six months. A nonsmoking, non-drinking vegetarian who eschews all dairy products simply cannot experience this kind of change in less than six months without some external factor."*

There are many more stories like this, telling of a myriad of health problems caused by soy. An executive secretary in her 50's with thyroid problems tells of how the hidden soy added to the bread she was eating caused such severe forgetfulness that she couldn't perform her job. When she stopped eating soy, the mental problems went away.

There are numerous problems caused by soy formulas fed to infants, including difficulty digesting it, lack of sufficient nutrients and toxins. However, one of the biggest problems is the hormonal disruption caused by the isoflavones in soy. Soy isoflavones are phytoestrogens, which are plant-based estrogens that act like hormones. There are enough of them in soy to cause severe disruption to the hormonal systems of infants during a critical period in their hormonal development. The effects are often not seen until later, when they enter puberty (sometimes the phytoestrogens even cause early puberty).

The Whole Soy Story cites a study with cheetahs at the Cincinnati Zoo that were failing to reproduce and suffering from liver disease. Part of the cause was found to



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be the soy-protein portion of their feed. Cheetahs fed whole carcasses of beef, chicken and other animals have no difficulty reproducing. Cats are particularly susceptible to damage from soy, since they don't have the liver enzymes to deactivate the phytoestrogens, however soy estrogens are a risk for all animals and can be compared with taking DES (a synthetic estrogen given to promote growth in animals). There are studies suggesting that soy is playing a role in the current epidemic of infertility, menstrual and other reproductive problems in humans.

If you are wondering why a plant would contain a compound like phytoestrogens that can be damaging to animals, it is actually an ingenious survival mechanism for the plant. Research has found that plants produce more phytoestrogens in dry years. The animals eating the plant would then have lower reproductive capacity, so there would be fewer animals produced to eat up the plant and the plant could survive the drought. In wet years, when the plant is growing more prolifically, they produce fewer phytoestrogens and therefore the animals eating them would reproduce in greater numbers.

How could something so bad for you be promoted as a health food, you may ask? Like many other things, it's all about big business, marketing and profits. Even the holistic doctors promoting soy usually benefit from it financially, in their associations with companies that make foods containing soy. One has to assume they are ignorant of the problems with soy or think them insignificant, as evidenced by the fact that Christiane Northrup, M.D., promoter of the high-isoflavone Revival soy products, was recently diagnosed as hypothyroid (soy isoflavones suppress the thyroid). Growing and processing soy is a big business. All the various components of soybeans are highly processed to create the wide array of soy foods now on the market, as well as adding soy components to many existing foods, like meats at fast food restaurants. No part of the soybean is thrown away--every part of it is processed into some type of food product for humans or animals. There is a huge profit to be made in selling all these soy products. The soybean industry therefore puts a spin on the supposed health benefits of soy and downplays the levels of toxins in them. For instance, soy is promoted as helping alleviate the symptoms of menopause but there are numerous studies showing that soy is no better than a placebo for this. Soybeans have replaced indigenous crops in many countries around the world. According to The Whole Soy Story, soybean farming has caused more loss of Amazon rainforest than cattle ranching. So if you are eating your soy burgers to spare the rain forest, you are actually causing more destruction of it.

There are so many health issues with soy that they cannot all be addressed in this article. If you want to learn more, we suggest going to the Weston Price website page on soy: [www.westonaprice.org/soy/index.html](http://www.westonaprice.org/soy/index.html) or reading the Whole Soy Story,



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featured as our Book of the Month. When buying pet foods, we suggest reading the labels carefully and avoiding those that contain soy, especially soy protein isolate, which is quite concentrated in soy toxins. You will find soy protein isolate even in some premium brands of pet foods. We have also removed soy from our own diets, except for the fermented products of soy sauce, miso and tempeh and we look for products that have been slowly fermented over time, to maximize the reduction of toxins in soy.

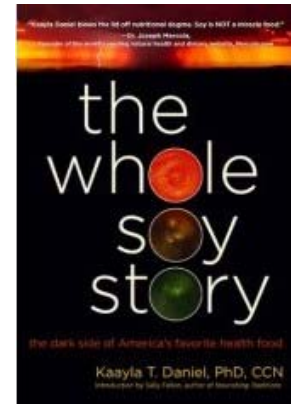
## Book of the month

*The Whole Soy Story: the dark side of America's favorite health food*

by Kaayla T. Daniel, PhD, CCN  
ISBN 0967089751

Click picture to order from [Tropical Traditions](#)

Reviewed by Margaret Auld-Louie



The problems with soy are so extensive that we could write a book on it. Fortunately, we don't have to because Kaayla Daniel just did. *The Whole Soy Story* is a book that needs to be in the hands of every human and animal health care provider and nutritionist in America. This extensively researched and footnoted book details the history of soy consumption in humans, how and why soy foods became popular in America, the problems with how soy is processed today (creating even more toxins) and the myriad of health problems caused by the different types of soy that are now ubiquitous in our food supply. She cites many scientific studies and explains how the soy industry has twisted the results of scientific studies for marketing reasons, to make it appear that soy is good for us. If you think soy is a health food, read this book and you will emerge with a different point of view. The author of the book, Kaayla T. Daniel, is a certified nutritionist with a PhD in Nutritional Sciences and a board member of the Weston Price Foundation.

I wish this book had been available four years ago when a prominent, nationally-known environmental medicine doctor in Denver told me to take soy isoflavones to reduce my breast cancer risk. I mentioned my concerns to him about the toxicity of soy, which he dismissed as "nonsense from the Internet". I said it came from the Weston Price Foundation and he responded that he had never heard of them. Then he explained that Jonathan Wright, MD (a nationally-known holistic doctor) recommended soy isoflavones for someone with lab results like mine and that was





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good enough for him. (Fortunately for me, I did not follow the doctor's recommendations and I never took soy isoflavones).

After that encounter, you can imagine my surprise when I opened *The Whole Soy Story* and read the following endorsement by the same Dr. Jonathan Wright:

*"Our bodies are simply not designed or adapted to safely use and metabolize more than very small quantities of any food, including soy, which is not part of the original human diet. In *The Whole Soy Story*, Kaayla Daniel ably explains the science showing that for the best long-term health, we should consume soy and soy products sparingly, if at all."*

The book contains a whole chapter on the problems with the phytoestrogens in soy (including isoflavones). All I can say after reading it is "thank God I never took soy isoflavones or received soy formula as an infant".

William Campbell Douglass, M.D. states *"This is the most important nutritional book of the decade"* and I agree with him. You should run, not walk, to get this book and find out the damage that soy can do to your health as well as how to recognize the hidden soy found in most processed foods. The least expensive place to purchase this book is from the website of Tropical Traditions, who offers healthy foods and body care products, as well as important health books such as this. They are currently offering the book at a discounted price of \$13.95 if ordered with a bottle of virgin coconut oil (this offer may be for a limited time only). The book is also available at Pet Empawrium in Arvada, Colorado. You can find more information about the book and soy on Kaayla Daniel's website, [www.thewholesoystory.com](http://www.thewholesoystory.com).

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