



OPTIONS CENTER HEALTH TOPIC



SOY: TO USE OR NOT TO USE? THAT IS THE QUESTION!

Over consumption of soy can have a negative impact on the thyroid, on overall health, and on weight management. Many Americans suffer from symptoms such as cold hands and feet, low body temperature, sensitivity to cold, a feeling of always being chilled, headaches, insomnia, dry skin, puffy eyes, hair loss, brittle nails, joint aches, constipation, mental dullness, fatigue, frequent infections, hoarse voice, ringing in the ears, dizziness, loss of libido, and sometimes uncontrollable weight gain. Approximately 65% of the US population is overweight; 27% is clinically obese. Research is pointing to the fact that an under active thyroid might be the number one cause of weight problems, especially among women.



The Truth about Fats and Oils

Many dietary oils can negatively affect thyroid health. We cook with them almost every day and they are plentiful in commercially prepared foods. Expeller-pressed or solvent-extracted oils only became a major part of the American diet in the last century.

It is possible they are among the worst offenders when it comes to the thyroid.

They are known as vegetable oils or polyunsaturated oils. The most common source of these oils used in commercially prepared foods is the **soybean**. Large-scale cultivation of soybeans in the United States began after World War II and quickly increased to 140 billion pounds per year. Most of the crops are produced for animal feed and **soy oil** for hydrogenated fats such as margarine and shortening.

Eating Out

Today it is nearly impossible to eat at restaurants or buy packaged foods that don't have **soy oil** in the ingredients. Often labels simply state "vegetable oil." Ray Peat, Ph.D., a physiologist who has worked with progesterone and related hormones since 1968, says that the sudden surge of polyunsaturated oils into the food chain post World War II has caused many changes in hormones.

He writes: The best understood negative effect [of polyunsaturated oils] is the way they interfere with the function of the **thyroid gland**. Unsaturated oils block thyroid hormone secretion, its movement in the circulatory system, and the response of tissues to the hormone. When the thyroid hormone is deficient, the body is generally exposed to increased levels of estrogen.

Hormonal Health

The thyroid hormone is essential for making the **protective hormones** *progesterone* and *pregnenolone*, so these hormones are lowered when anything interferes with the function of the thyroid. The thyroid hormone is required for using and eliminating cholesterol, so **cholesterol** is likely to be raised by anything that blocks the thyroid function.

Research

There is a growing body of research concerning **soy's** detrimental effect on the thyroid gland. Much of this research centers on the phytoestrogens ("phyto" means plant) that are found in **soy**. In the 1960s when **soy** was introduced into infant formulas, it was shown that soy was goitrogenic and caused **goiters** in babies. When iodine was supplemented, the incidence of goiter reduced dramatically. However, a study has shown that teenaged children with a diagnosis of **autoimmune thyroid disease** were significantly more likely to have received **soy formula** as infants when compared to healthy siblings or control group children.

When healthy individuals without any previous thyroid disease were fed 30 grams of pickled **soybeans** per day for one month, studies reported **goiter** and elevated individual thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) levels in 37 healthy, iodine-sufficient adults. One month after stopping **soybean** consumption, individual TSH values decreased to the original levels and goiters were reduced in size.

For more information about the effects of **soy** in the modern diet, go to
www.westonaprice.org/soy/index.html.

- Cherie Calbom, M.S.