

Can phytoestrogens relieve the physical, social discomfort of menopausal symptoms?

Years ago, while speaking to 120 pharmacy students in an auditorium in Pullman, Washington, I had my first hot flash. I noticed my scalp suddenly feeling hot and prickly. Two heartbeats later, a shower of sweat gushed down my neck and back. In less than 5 seconds, I was soaking wet!

Can phytoestrogens relieve the physical and social discomfort of menopausal symptoms like sudden hot flashes/flushes or their night-time equivalent, night sweats?

For decades, researchers have noticed how Asian women don't suffer as much from hot flashes during menopause as Western women do, labeling it the "Japanese Effect." The primary reason for this difference is believed to be diet.

A typical Asian diet contains much more soy than a standard American diet. Foods containing soy and soy concentrates contain phytoestrogens, which are plant-based substances act-



ing in your body in ways and places similar to estrogen.

But eating more soy is only part of the answer. Protection against hot flushes may also depend upon whether your body can change the basic phytoestrogens found in soy into equol, a powerful phytoestrogen. Overall, 30-50% of North American women can convert soy into equol. Asian and Hispanic women can do this more easily.

Phytoestrogens work by attaching or binding to the same places in your body that other types of estrogens do. These binding sites are called estrogen receptors, or ERs. The two main types of ERs are ER alpha and ER beta receptors. Most estrogens and phytoestrogens bind to ER alpha receptors, which can also stimulate breast and uterine cancer.

However, some phytoestrogens bind to ER-beta

receptors, which triggers the opposite effect. Binding to ER-beta receptors can BLOCK the action of estrogen on breast tissue. This is similar to how the estrogen-blocking medicines tamoxifen and raloxifene (Evista®) help prevent certain types of breast cancer.

Unfortunately, studying the effects of any one phytoestrogen in the body is challenging. One reason is that foods and herbal sources of phytoestrogens contain different types of phytoestrogens. The 2 most common types of phytoestrogens are isoflavones and lignans. Soybeans contain isoflavones like genistein and daidzein, while lignans are found in flaxseed, fruits and vegetables, and other foods.

Another reason it's hard to predict the effects of phytoestrogens is that some attach to ER-alpha receptors, some to ER-beta receptors, and some to BOTH, which can create different outcomes. This may explain why

phytoestrogens have been shown to encourage weight loss in post-menopausal women in some studies yet weight gain in others.

Depending on their growing conditions, plants can also have variable concentrations of phytoestrogens. An additional complication is how much estrogen is already in place. Phytoestrogens can act differently in pre-menopausal women compared to post-menopausal women, whose bodies contain much less estrogen.

How much soy do you need to reduce hot flashes/hot flush symptoms? Most clinical studies have used between 40 and 80 mg of phytoestrogens from soy-based products daily. Recent evidence suggests you should start with 2 servings a day of soy foods for 3 months, noting whether you experience fewer episodes of hot flashes/flushes.

One serving of soy food can be 3 ounces of tofu, ½ cup of edamame, ½ cup of tofu, ¼ cup soy nuts, or 1 cup of soymilk.

Flaxseed, chickpeas, beans, peas, green leafy vegetables, cauliflower, and nuts are good sources of phytoestrogens. After trying soy for 3 months, if you don't notice any decrease in your hot flashes or hot flushes, you can stop it.

Can eating soy-based food cause breast cancer? If you're not a vegetarian, you're unlikely to get enough soy in your diet to increase your risk of breast cancer.

Be cautious about taking supplements that contain phytoestrogens and estrogen-like compounds. Soy concentrates and herbal products like black cohosh marketed for "menopause support," like Remifemin®, may increase breast cancer risk.

Here are 3 Tips for Taking Phytoestrogens Safely:

1. You CAN eat food containing soy, even if you have a history of breast cancer.

Moderation is the key. If you are vegetarian or vegan, don't eat tofu or tempeh every day, and watch your consumption of soy milk.

2. Be cautious with supplements for menopausal symptoms.

If you have a family history or an increased risk of breast cancer, avoid taking supplements containing concentrated phytoestrogens, like soy concentrates or black cohosh, until more is known about their long-term effects.

3. Stick to phytoestrogens that have had their potency tested.

The exact concentrations of certain phytoestrogens differ depending on growing conditions. The best phytoestrogen supplements measure and standardize every batch to ensure consistent potency.

Dr. Louise Achey, Doctor of Pharmacy, is a 43-year veteran of pharmacology and the author of Why Dogs Can't Eat Chocolate: How Medicines Work and How YOU Can Take Them Safely. Get clear answers to your medication questions at her website and blog TheMedicationInsider.com. ©2022 Louise Achey

Breast Cancer Glossary

COMPILED BY CAROL FORHAN, 32-YEAR SURVIVOR

Educate yourself on these terms when your doctor talks to you about breast cancer

Adjuvant therapy: Treatment such as chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, or radiation used following surgery to cure, reduce, or control cancer.

Aspiration: The use of a hollow needle and syringe to suction out fluid or cells from a cyst or tumor.

Atypical lobular hyperplasia: Abnormally shaped cells multiplying excessively

in the normal tissue of a breast lobule.

Axillary: In the armpit.

Benign: Not cancerous.

Biopsy: Tissue or cells removed from the body and examined microscopically to determine whether cancer is present.

Calcifications: Small calcium deposits in breast tissue that can be seen by mammography.

Carcinoma: Cancer that arises from epithelial tissue (tissue that lines a cavity or surface); occurs often in the breast.

Chemo-prevention: The use of drugs or chemicals to

prevent cancer.

Chemotherapy: Treatment of cancer with powerful drugs that destroy cancer cells.

Core needle biopsy: Use of a hollow needle to extract a sample of a lump or other suspicious tissue for examination.

Cyst: A lump or swelling filled with fluid or semifluid material.

Duct: A channel in the

breast that carries milk from the lobule to the nipple during lactation.

Estrogen: A female sex hormone produced chiefly by the ovaries.

Estrogen receptor: A site on the surface of some cells to which estrogen molecules attach.

False negative: Test results that incorrectly indicate that the tested disease or substance is not present.

Fibroadenoma: A benign, fibrous tumor commonly found in the breast.

Free radicals: Toxic atoms produced by chemical reactions within a cell.

Hematoma: A swelling formed of blood. Infrequently occurs at the site of surgery, such as in a biopsy cavity after a lumpectomy.

Hyperplasia: Excessive cell growth.

Infiltrating cancer: A

cancer that has spread from its site of origin into surrounding tissue.

In situ: Latin for "in place." As part of the term "ductal carcinoma in situ," it means that cancer cells exist and are still contained within the ducts of the milk-producing gland.

Lobules: Milk-producing glands of the breast.

Lymphedema: An accumulation of lymph fluid in the arm, hand, or breast that may develop when lymphatic vessels or nodes have been removed or blocked by surgery, or after radiation therapy. It can appear immediately after treatment or many years later.

Lymph nodes: Small, bean-shaped organs linked by lymphatic vessels. As part of the immune system, they filter out germs and foreign matter. Also called lymph glands.

Malignant: Cancerous.

Metastasis: The spread of cancer cells from the site of origin to another part of the body.

Metastases: Secondary cancers that form after cancer cells spread to other parts of the body.

Neoadjuvant therapy: Therapy with anticancer drugs or radiation given before surgery in order to shrink a tumor.

Palpable: Able to be felt.

Progesterone: A hormone produced by the ovaries and adrenal glands; essential for healthy functioning of the female reproductive system.

Radiation therapy: The use of x-rays at very high doses to treat or control disease.

Seroma: An accumulation of lymphatic fluid under an incision.

Content provided by MammoSite Breast Cancer Information. www.mammosite.com

Screening saves lives by helping find breast cancer early.

Finding cancer early may give you more treatment options, including Breast Conserving Therapy instead of a mastectomy.

Get your mammogram. Tell your friends, mothers, sisters, aunts, and daughters to do the same. Be a Friend. Tell a Friend. Get Your Mammogram.

Information from American Cancer Society

The Self-Breast Exam

Because breast cancer is the most common cancer for women today, routine self-examination is an essential step in catching the disease early.

In fact, according to the National Breast Cancer Association, 40 percent of diagnosed breast cancers are detected by women through self-examination.

By examining yourself on a monthly basis, you will quickly become familiar with your breasts and the surrounding tissue and will easily be able to see or feel an abnormality, such as an unusual lump, changes in the skin or any sort of discharge.

HOW TO LOOK

While physically looking down at your breasts is a good start, it is not adequate for a full examination. To view each section of your breasts equally, you must stand in front of a mirror.

Check for dents, pits, and any sort of odd coloring. Be sure to check your breasts standing straight ahead with your arms resting at your sides, again straight ahead with your arms raised above your head, and again leaning slightly forward with your hands on your hips.

HOW TO FEEL

Just as you do with a visual examination, to properly feel your breasts for abnormalities, you must examine them in several positions.

The shower is an excellent location for an exam, because the water helps your fingers glide over the tissue easily. Use the middle part of your first three fingers (rather than the fingertips) to gently crowd the breast.

Move your hand from the outside of the breast towards the nipple and then back out to the edge. Do not ignore the fleshy part of your armpit, as this is also technically breast tissue and should not be overlooked.



The other position you should perform a breast exam in is flat on your back. When you are lying down, the breast tissue lays evenly along the wall of your chest.

Lift the arm coinciding with the breast you are examining above your head (left arm with the left breast, right arm with the right breast),

and perform the same movements as in the shower.

Use both light and firm pressure and be cognizant of any pain. Keeping a journal of any abnormalities and follow-up doctor visits is a great way to stay on top of your overall breast health.

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BREAST CANCER

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Honoring Breast Cancer Survivors



Carol L. Forhan
Survivor: 32 years
Occupation: NCW Media, owner, publisher, ad manager, Ordained Episcopal Deacon, and Nutcracker Museum Board member.

Orianna Keegan
Is a retired United States Postal Clerk, (Lake Chelan Post Office). Her interests include church, time with family, travel, and Disney. She is a 29 year, 10 month survivor.

Barbara Rist Blankenship
Is retired, She likes gardening, reading, yard work, her grandkids, and her new kitten. She is a 25 year, 1 month survivor.

Sandi Gruenberg
Is retired. Interests are family, playing with her grandchildren, Chelan Chase, and raising money for Breast Cancer Research. She is a 23 year, 2 month survivor.

Vicki Hoffman
Is a music assistant with the with Lake Chelan School District; and likes being with her family, especially three granddaughters. She is a 22 year, 4 month survivor.

Nancy Baum
Is retired and loves kayaking, biking, golfing, boating and drinking wine. She is a 22 year, 10 month survivor



Joan Lester
Is retired and she is a 20 year survivor.

Anne Brooks
Is a school bus driver. Interest includes electric vehicles, being outside and quilting. She is a 17 year, 6 month survivor.

Nelda Monteleone
is 97 years old and has been cancer free for 16 years. She lives at Heritage Heights.

Kathy Whetstine
Is a retired deputy sheriff who loves horses, gardening, being a grandma, quilting and embroidery. She is a 10 year survivor.

Carolyn Cockrum
Is retired. Her interests include golf, gardening and her grandchildren. She is a 7 1/2 year survivor.

Connie Hedman
Is a retired educational administrator. Her interests are her family, water activities and sewing. She is a 3 year survivor.

Shirley A. Miller
Is retired. Her interests and hobbies are family, friends and church, and collecting rocks. She is a two time breast cancer survivor, 9 years and 7 months.

Local, National Support

LOCAL SUPPORT

- Cancer Care of NCW, Inc. Our House, Wenatchee: 509-663-6964 or Email: cancare@nwi.net
- Wellness Place, Wenatchee, 509-888-9933. Support groups, and other resources.
- Cascade Medical, Leavenworth, 509-548-5815.
- Confluence Health/Wenatchee Valley Medical, 509-663-8711.
- Confluence Health, Breast, Cervical and Colon Cancer Health Program, 509-664-3415.
- EASE Cancer Founda-

- tion, Cashmere: 509-860-1322 or www.easecancer.org
- Lake Chelan Health Hospital, Chelan, 509-682-3300
- Columbia Valley Community Health, Chelan, 509-682-6000
- Lake Chelan Express Care Clinic, Chelan, 509-682-8511
- Three Rivers Hospital, Brewster, 509-689-2517
- Family Health Center, Brewster, 509-689-3455
- Seattle Cancer Alliance, 800-804-8824, www.seattlecca.org

NATIONAL SUPPORT:

- American Cancer Society, (ACS) 800ACS-2345, www.cancer.org. Programs include: I Can Cope, Look Good, Feel Better, LookGoodFeelBetter.org, 800-395-LOOK Reach to Recovery, a one-to-one survivors' help program.
- New Birthday Campaign: Less Cancer, More Birthdays. MoreBirthdays.com, Facebook and blog Official-BirthdayBlog.com or Cancer.org/circleofsharing.
- American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology. 1-800-962-7876, www.astro.org.
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 888-475-2784, www.plasticsurgery.org.
- AVON Foundation www.avonfoundation.org
- Blood & Marrow Transplant Information Network 1-888-597-7674, [www/bm-tinfonet.org](http://www.bm-tinfonet.org)
- Become a member of Love/Avon www.armyofwomen.org or 866-569-0388
- Living Beyond Breast Cancer, 888-753-5222 www.lbbc.org.
- National Breast Cancer Coalition, 1-800-622-2838, www.stopbreastcancer.org

- or www.canceradvocacy.org
- National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
- Online community Cancerversary.org use to create your own Web pages
- Susan G. Komen For the Cure, 1-877-GO-KOMEN, www.komen.org
- The Breast Cancer Alliance, 203-861-0014, www.breastcanceralliance.org
- National Lymphedema Network, 1-800-541-3259, www.lymphet.org.
- SHARE (Breast Cancer Hotline) 1-866-891-2392, www.share-cancersupport.org
- Vital Options International, 1-800-477-7666 www.vitaloptions.org
- Zero Breast Cancer: www.zerobreastcancer.org

Wellness Place Breast Cancer Awareness Month events

SUBMITTED BY JULIE LINDHOLM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT WELLNESS PLACE

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual campaign to raise awareness about the impact of breast cancer. To kick off this important month, Wellness Place has four events the first week of October to bring awareness and support their mission of providing free support to cancer patients in North Central Washington.

- Taproom at Hellbent Brewery - Wednesday, October 5**
It's "Warrior Wednesday with Wellness Place" at The Taproom by Hellbent Brewing at Pybus Public Market in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month. All day long, they will donate \$1 for every Hellbent Pint and \$2 for every "Pint to Go" to Wellness Place (glassware included, availability limited). Also, you can write notes of encouragement to be given to our NCW cancer warriors! Do Good. Drink Beer.
- Pybus Farmers Market - Saturday, October 8, 9-11 a.m.**
Visit us at the Wellness Place table during the Pybus Farmers Market to learn about our nonprofit, and the free cancer services and support we provide. We will have breast cancer awareness handouts, and kids can draw "Happy Letters" to provide a smile and encouragement for our NCW cancer warriors during their cancer journey.

Wellness Place FREE education afternoon - Saturday, October 8, 1-4 p.m.
Join us for "A Mindset of Meaning". Designed for, and free, for all cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, and loved ones. An afternoon of learning how to cultivate tools to support meaning and well-being. Registration required at www.WellnessPlaceNCW.org

Dr Chandra Villano, ND, and Kari Lyons-Price, MSW with Meditate Wenatchee will present topics including:
• Cultivate Connection- Open hearted approach to harmoni-

ous and consistent optimal breathing, grounding, and mindful movement.

- Nutrition: Wellness Mindset- Overview of tasty Abundance Bowls & Gratitude Bowls for ease of anti-inflammatory whole foods prep, rotation, variety, and maximizing nutrition.
 - The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Experience- By design this course empowers participants to take an active role in the management of their health and wellness.
 - Sleep Hygiene- High quality sleep is vital for healing and feeling and being well. Learn about an arsenal of practices for getting the invaluable sleep you need.
- "At Wellness Place we are committed to helping all cancer warriors in our community, no matter the cancer diagnosis," says executive director Julie Lindholm. "However, 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, so for the month of October it is our mis-

sion to bring awareness and reminders to our community members to get your mammograms, and self-check your

breasts regularly. The earlier breast cancer is diagnosed, the better the chance of successful treatment."

No One Fights Alone.

Wellness Place
— compassionate cancer support —

We give FREE cancer support and services to all cancer warriors in Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties.

LEARN MORE AT:
WellnessPlaceNCW.org
#509-888-9933

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