

WHW
everyday!

SPOTLIGHT ON...

menopause

Got soy? You should! Research shows that a soy-rich diet may boost your protection against arterial disease after menopause. Read on for details!

News You Can Use

Dietary Soy May Protect Arteries After Menopause

Call it the joy of soy: Drinking soy milk and eating tofu-based meals may boost older women's defenses against atherosclerosis and arterial degeneration, according to a new study of 400 postmenopausal women.

Soy contains natural plant hormones called phytoestrogens, which act like a weak version of the female hormone estrogen and may mimic its beneficial effects on the heart - without the risks that accompany synthetic estrogen supplements.

To determine soy's effects, researchers asked participants about their diet and measured the rigidity of their aortas, according to the report in *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology* published by the American Heart Association.

The study results linked phytoestrogens to decreased artery stiffness - possibly through a positive effect on vascular walls - thus reducing the risk for arterial disease. Among study participants, women with longer postmenopausal time spans (20 to 30 years) enjoyed the greatest benefits.

During menopause, the body decreases production of the hormone estrogen. This drop in estrogen is associated with an increased risk of heart disease among postmenopausal women. But this new research shows that a healthy diet, rich in soy products may pick up the slack after menopause curbs estrogen production.

A huge variety of foods now features soy. Most major supermarkets carry a selection of soy milks (including flavored milks) and cheeses, soy versions of burgers and sausages, versatile soybeans as well as soy-based frozen entrees, tofu and miso.

Higher Usual Dietary Intake of Phytoestrogens is Associated with Lower Aortic Stiffness in Postmenopausal Women. By YT van der Schouw, A Pijpe, CEI Lebrun, ML Bots, PHM Peeters, WA van Staveren, SWJ Lamberts and DE Grobbee. *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology*, 2002; 22:1316-1322.

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Will an obese child become an obese adult? Do you believe some people are genetically destined to be heavy? Read on!

News You Can Use

New Research Focuses on Predicting Obesity, Controlling Weight

Do your genes affect the fit of your jeans? Two new studies provide an intriguing look at predicting obesity and controlling weight.

First, a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* focuses on how a newly revised growth chart can be used to predict whether an overweight child will become an overweight adult. Researchers found that a child or adolescent with a Body Mass Index (BMI) at the 85th percentile or higher faces a high risk of being overweight or obese as an adult. (BMI factors in both weight and height in determining whether a person is overweight.)

Tracking children's and teens' BMI can help identify and monitor those at risk of becoming overweight or obese adults. Timely interventions can put these youths on a healthier path to adulthood.

Meanwhile, a second research study found that attitudes may affect weight control as much as diet and lifestyle choices.

According to researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, women who think their weight is "all in their genes" are heavier than women who believe that genetics plays a very small role in weight control. Women who believe they - not their genes -- control their weight are thinner, concluded researchers writing in the *International Journal of Obesity*.

For women, it seems that, if you think you can, you can; and if you think you can't, you can't. Interestingly, such beliefs in men made no difference in their weight.

The influence of individual choices and attitudes on adiposity. By AF Kuchler and B-H Lin. In *International Journal of Obesity*, 2002; 26(7):1017-1022.

Predicting overweight and obesity in adulthood from body mass index values in childhood and adolescence. By S Sun Guo, W Wu, WC Chumlea and F Roche. In *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2002; 76:653-658.