

Health Tip Tuesday

Isoflavones



Isoflavones are a class of phytoestrogens, plant-derived compounds with estrogenic activity. Soybeans and soy products are the richest sources of isoflavones in the human diet. They may have some positive benefits, including protections against breast and prostate cancer, menopausal symptoms, heart disease and osteoporosis. There is much controversy about consumption of high levels of isoflavones, since the efficacy and safety of soy isoflavones have not yet been established. The chemical composition of isoflavones is similar to estrogen, and they have a weak estrogenic activity. Despite the controversy, the American Heart Association has concluded that foods containing isoflavones are beneficial since they are a source of polyunsaturated fat, and are high in fiber, vitamins and minerals and dietary protein.

Add these foods high in isoflavones to your diet for an added nutritional punch:

Soy protein – Just 3.5 ounces of soy protein contain 102 milligrams of isoflavones. The National Institute of Health recommends a minimum of 25 grams of soy protein per day to prevent heart disease. Try a soy burger instead of your usual higher fat beef burger and then top it like you would a hamburger with lettuce, tomato and onion. Boca burger makes an excellent soy burger. Tofu can be added to stir-fry dishes and it will take on the flavor of the foods it is cooked with.

Soy nuts- plain or salted, these make a great snack or you can add them to salads or other dishes.

Miso – a Japanese mixture of fermented cooked rice, barley, soybeans and salt that makes a savory sauce, spread or soup. A half-cup serving of miso has 59 milligrams of isoflavones.

Edamame – easy-to-prepare soybeans that you boil contain 47 milligrams of isoflavones for a half-cup serving. Try adding these to a stir fry for added fiber and protein. You can find them in the frozen section of your grocery store.

For more information on nutrition or to make an appointment for individual consultation or to register for our **group diabetes classes** or **group weight loss program** contact Michele McAlister, registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator at (325) 793-5251 or email at mmcalister@abilenedc.com