

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Q: How does soy relate to breast cancer?

There may be an inverse relationship between soy consumption and breast cancer, especially if soy is eaten during childhood and puberty. Other foods such as peanuts, peas and lentils have similar properties to soy. All are plants that contain their fruit inside pods and are in a class called legumes. Legumes are converted by the gut flora to extremely weak estrogens called phytoestrogens.

These weak estrogens, also known as isoflavones, bind to the breast receptors and in turn through biofeedback, the brain tells the ovaries not to produce the much more potent estrogens. However, many American women lack the enzyme to convert the soy to its active compound. These women benefit from eating fermented soy like miso or tempeh which has already been converted.

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