



LESSON 27: "SOY & GLUTEN - WHY THE BAD REP?"

Soy and gluten tend to be very controversial and often get a bad reputation. Soy gets criticized almost to the point of being demonized. But why is that so?

Soy

First things first. Let's remember that soy is, after all, a bean. It's not a chemical or a toxin, it's legume just like any other bean and populations all over the globe have eating it for many many generations. The reason soy in particular is often linked to misinformation and confusion is that it contains phyto-estrogen whose molecules are very similar in shape to the molecules of estrogen. That is why people believe that eating soy will affect their hormone levels in a negative way. Phyto-estrogen, however, does *not* affect the body in the way estrogen would (I've linked a detailed article about this, which lists plenty of studies and scientific sources below so you can read about it in detail). What's interesting is that cow's milk (and the milk of other animals) does contain hormones, yet not as many people seem to be concerned about this as they are about soy. Make sure that whenever you hear about the dangers of certain foods, you look into where the information came from and whose interest it is benefitting. Generally speaking, unless you have an allergy or sensitivity, soy consumed in moderation (as edamame, tofu, tempeh or soy milk, for instance) is absolutely fine.

According to Registered Dietitian Jack Norris from veganhealth.org, “[b]etween 1990 and 2010, there were over 10,000 peer-reviewed journal articles on soy (122). A large percentage of these were conducted in animals which can make the results irrelevant to humans because species differ in how they metabolize soy isoflavones and because the amount of isoflavones given to the animals is often much greater than any human would eat. This much research makes soy one of the most researched foods and also increases the chances of finding results that are outliers – studies that by random chance, or the inability to control variables, could show soy to be harmful (or helpful) when it actually is not. The large number of studies allow people who want to make a case against soy to simply highlight a handful when the bulk of research provides a different view. Of course, someone could make a case in favor of soy in the same way. It is, therefore, important is to perform a comprehensive review of the research on any given topic, which I do below for the

most important controversies surrounding the potential harm of soy foods.” [Click here to read the entire article: http://veganhealth.org/articles/soy_wth]

Gluten

The main reason the Vegan Reset meal plans are gluten-free is because some people have an intolerance or allergy not allowing them to consume it and since there are so many whole foods that are naturally gluten-free, it is very easy to simply make the entire plan gluten-free. Unless you do have an intolerance or allergy, however, abstaining from gluten is not a must. The best way to find out whether or not gluten affects you negatively or you just feel better without it, is to cut it out of your diet for a week or two and try to observe any changes in how you feel.

As Virginia Messina, R.D., puts it, “[a] gluten-free diet is an absolute necessity for those who have celiac disease, a permanent intolerance to gluten. It used to be a very difficult diet to follow but the rise in the number of excellent gluten-free foods is changing that, which is definitely a good thing. However, this autoimmune disease affects only one percent of the population so most vegans have no reason to eliminate gluten from their diets.]