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In a recent large study of US and Chinese women, soy food intake after diagnosis of breast cancer reduced the risk of breast cancer-related death and recurrence of cancer.

SOY CONSUMPTION AFTER BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS

It is well established that soy isoflavones have antiestrogenic and anticancer properties. However, because of the estrogen-like properties of soy, concerns have been raised about soy food consumption among women diagnosed with breast cancer and breast cancer survivors.

New research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* sought to evaluate the association between post diagnosis soy food intake and breast cancer outcomes including breast cancer related mortality and recurrence.

The participants included 9,514 breast cancer survivors with a diagnosis of invasive breast cancer between 1991 and 2006. The study included data from 2 US cohorts and 1 Chinese cohort, using information from the After Breast Cancer Pooling Project. Subjects were followed up for an average of 7.4 years.

Soy isoflavone intake was measured with food-frequency questionnaires, and the analysis also adjusted for sociodemographic, clinical, and lifestyle factors.

Although there were relatively large differences in soy isoflavone intake by country, isoflavone consumption was inversely associated with recurrence among both US and Chinese women. The association of increased soy intake to lower recurrence remained whether the data was analyzed separately by country or combined.

The consumption of 10 mg/day or more of soy isoflavones was associated with a reduced risk of all-cause and breast cancer-specific mortality, although it was not statistically significant. However, there was a statistically significant reduction in risk of recurrence in those getting the higher levels of isoflavones.

Results from the combined data in this large group of US and Chinese women showed that consumption of at least 10 mg/day of soy isoflavones reduced the risk of breast cancer-specific mortality and significantly reduced the risk of breast cancer recurrence.

Sarah J Nechuta et al. Soy food intake after diagnosis of breast cancer and survival: an in-depth analysis of combined evidence from cohort studies of US and Chinese women. Am J Clin Nutr July 2012 vol. 96 no. 1 123-132.