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FDA Confirms Heart Health Benefits of Soy with New Qualified Health Claim

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has confirmed the heart health benefits of soy with its recent decision to authorize a qualified health claim, say members of the Soy Nutrition Institute (SNI), an organization dedicated to research on soy and health.

“Soyfoods are sources of heart-healthy, high-quality plant protein that fit seamlessly into a variety of diets,” says SNI Executive Director Mark Messina, Ph.D., M.S. “As plant-based diets continue to surge, consumers can be confident in soy as a protein source throughout the lifespan.”

Over the past 20 years, at least 12 countries have approved health claims for soyfoods and coronary heart disease based on the cholesterol-lowering effects of soy protein. The most recent country to do so was Canada, which approved a claim in 2015.

Messina says a [recent analysis](#) by David Jenkins, M.D., Ph.D., and colleagues at the University of Toronto showed “the cholesterol lowering effect of soy was consistent and clinically relevant.” Messina also noted that soyfoods provide ample amounts of high-quality protein and some are low in saturated fat.

When the fatty acid content of the diet improves, Messina notes, heart disease risk is reduced. “Given their attributes, soyfoods have played key roles in diets shown to significantly lower elevated cholesterol levels,” he said.

Messina notes that the new qualified health claim keeps soy protein on par with other foods with cardiovascular disease health claims, including olive oil, tree nuts, and soybean oil. FDA health claims are allowed on food products or dietary supplements to show that a food or food component may reduce the risk of disease or health-related condition. Both soy protein and soy oil now have FDA authorized health claims, notes John Erdman, Ph.D., University of Illinois, a scientific advisor to the SNI.

“Now that the FDA has authorized health claims for soy protein as well as soybean oil, there is formal recognition that soyfoods can lower cholesterol through two different mechanisms,” Erdman said.

For additional information and related resources, visit www.TheSoyNutritionInstitute.com/HeartHealth.

The Soy Nutrition Institute is a scientific organization dedicated to research on soy and health. Established in 2004, the organization includes a scientific advisory board and research and health professionals from soy-related companies and organizations including the United Soybean Board, DuPont, ADM, Kellogg, Danone North America, Medifast, Impossible Foods, Herbalife, Soylent, House Foods America, Pharmavite, Agricultural Utilization Resource Institute (AURI), and the Soyfoods Council.

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