

Study: Soy won't fight bone loss after menopause

By Daniela Hernandez, Los Angeles Times

Soy tablets do little to stave off bone loss among menopausal women, according to new research. Women taking soy supplements also reported more hot flashes and constipation.

After the landmark Women's Health Initiative showed that hormone replacement therapy carried health risks, many women gravitated toward soy products as a safer alternative because soy is rich in isoflavones, so-called "dietary estrogens." Western women were also encouraged by studies that showed that their Asian counterparts, who eat a soy-rich diet, have lower rates of bone fractures, breast cancer and cardiovascular disease.

In this new study, researchers conducted a clinical trial in South Florida between July 2004 and March 2009 to assess whether taking soy supplements delayed bone loss associated with menopause. Nobody – not the subjects, not the scientists – knew who was getting the soy and who was getting a placebo. Women in the trial, 248 in number, were between the ages of 45 and 60, had gone through menopause in the last five years and had hip or lower back bone mineral density T-scores less than -2.0.

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