The Perfect Food For A Low-Carb Lifestyle?

by Dr. Debra Miller

(NAPSA)—The Atkins-driven, low-carb craze has made eating high-fat, high-cholesterol foods such as steak, sausage and bacon fashionable again. However, the jury is still out about whether or not such high-protein diets cause long-term health problems.

Some answers are on the way. A government-sponsored study currently is being conducted at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, which will examine how low-carb diets affect arteries, kidneys, bones, cholesterol levels, body composition and weight.

In the meantime, do people have to trade in their low-carb lifestyle to avoid future health problems? Perhaps the best thing to do if you're committed to the low-carb approach is look for healthier protein options such as soy.

Today, many products contain isolated soy protein ingredients such as Solae soy protein. Solae soy protein is specially produced to taste great, and can be found in everyday foods and beverages such as 8th Continent Light soymilk and Gardenburger meat alternatives.

Moreover, soy is associated with several health benefits.

Soy is a plant-based protein equal in protein quality to meat, milk and eggs, and also is fat- and cholesterol-free. Unlike many of the high-fat, high-cholesterol foods that are staples of the Atkins diet, research suggests eating soy helps lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. The body of evidence is so significant that the Food and Drug Administration approved a claim in 1999 stating 25 grams of soy protein a day may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

Another major health concern is the effect of high-protein intake on kidney health—especially in those at risk for kidney disease (such as people with type 2 diabetes). However, soy appears to be gentler on the kidneys than animal protein. According to a recent study published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, when soy protein was substituted for animal protein, participants had significantly reduced kidney filtration rates, which means the kidneys didn't have to work as hard to filter the blood.

Beyond tofu: Soy protein is a healthy alternative for low-carb diets, and can be found in a variety of foods and beverages.

Beyond improved heart and kidney health, research also suggests that eating soy protein with higher levels of isoflavones may help to reduce the risk of certain types of cancer, improve bone health, and ease certain menopausal symptoms.

For more information about soy, visit www.solaeliving.com.

Dr. Debra Miller is a Ph.D. in biobehavioral health and nutrition, and completed post-doctoral work at Harvard Medical School. Currently, she works for the The Solae Company.