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A new meta-analysis reveals that soy isoflavones can effectively reduce the symptoms and frequency of hot flashes, and that benefits increased with time beyond 4 weeks.

SOY ISOFLAVONES AND HOT FLASHES

A recent meta-analysis published in the journal *Menopause* compiled 17 previous trials to determine the efficacy of using soybean isoflavones to alleviate the frequency and severity of hot flashes. Of the trials looked at 13 included data on hot flash frequency and 9 looked at severity. The duration of the studies ranged from 6 weeks to 12 months.

The analysis revealed that the consumption of soy isoflavones reduced the occurrence of hot flashes by 20.6% compared to placebo. The soy isoflavones also reduced the severity of hot flashes by 26.2% compared to placebo. One trial that was analyzed stated that soy isoflavones benefits increase with time beyond 4 weeks, and another study recommended a supplementation period of at least 8 weeks. Based on the observed data this analysis agrees with recommendations, and observed an increase in the effect of soy isoflavones on hot flashes as the supplementation period increased.

The study concludes stating that “the results of this systematic review and meta-analysis clearly justify health professionals recommending that women who do not want to use hormone therapy try isoflavones for the relief of menopause-related hot flashes.”

Taku K, Melby MK, Kronenberg F, Kurzer MS, Messina M. Extracted or synthesized soybean isoflavones reduce menopausal hot flash frequency and severity: systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Menopause (New York, N.Y.)*. 2012;19(7):1-15.