



Vegetable proteins offer animal, soy alternatives

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LOS ANGELES -- Many people have allergies to foods like dairy, egg and soy, which can make it tough to eat well. And some vegetarians are just tired of soy. That's why some are turning to unlikely sources of protein, like peas and rice. Here are some creative ways to get these veggie proteins into your diet. "We like pea protein because the fact that it's allergen friendly," said David Codney, Peninsula Hotel executive chef. "And really at the end when you have so many allergies, casein allergies and soy allergies and milk allergies, peas is just very, very neutral."

Working at a posh hotel like the Peninsula, Codney must solve a lot of dietary concerns. So he experiments, putting pea protein in some of California's favorite foods: energy bars and smoothies.

One bar tastes chocolaty; the other is fruity, with no hint of the taste of peas.

"We blended a lot of peanut butter with it, a lot of nuts that we like, dried fruits, some flax seed, so there's enough texture in there to kind of offset it," said Codney.

He also adds pea protein to wheatgrass cucumber apple and ginger, or mixes it in with berries and pomegranate. Shake it up to wake up in the a.m.

Great for those who are allergic to things like dairy, eggs and soy, pea protein is now used as the protein in commercial goods like cereals, pastas, crackers and more.

"Pea protein is fantastic because it's a complete source of amino acids," said Carolyn Scott-Hamilton, author of "The Healthy Voyager." "It's high in antioxidants. It's almost the perfect protein because it's so easily digestible in our bodies."

Scott-Hamilton says it's about 90 to 97 percent digestible, which is higher than any other protein available.

Another high quality, allergen-free option? Rice protein.

"And that complete protein source was equal to that of a whey protein isolate. So it is a complete protein source, provides all the necessary nutrition in the right amounts," said

David Janow, World Rice Alliance. "And the body can absorb it equally throughout the day."

And while recent news regarding arsenic in rice has many people concerned, there are many brands with non-detectable levels offering a high-quality source of protein to add to soup, sauces, pasta, oatmeal and more.