World Health Organization Says Processed Meat Causes Cancer

Article date: October 26, 2015

By Stacy Simon

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified processed meat as a carcinogen, something that causes cancer. And it has classified red meat as a probable carcinogen, something that probably causes cancer. IARC is the cancer agency of the World Health Organization.

Processed meat includes hot dogs, ham, bacon, sausage, and some deli meats. It refers to meat that has been treated in some way to preserve or flavor it. Processes include salting, curing, fermenting, and smoking. Red meat includes beef, pork, lamb, and goat.

Twenty-two experts from 10 countries reviewed more than 800 studies to reach their conclusions. They found that eating 50 grams of processed meat every day increased the risk of colorectal cancer by 18%. That’s the equivalent of about 4 strips of bacon or 1 hot dog. For red meat, there was evidence of increased risk of colorectal, pancreatic, and prostate cancer.

Overall, the lifetime risk of someone developing colon cancer is 5%. To put the numbers into perspective, the increased risk from eating the amount of processed meat in the study would raise average lifetime risk to almost 6%.

Colleen Doyle, MS, RD, American Cancer Society managing director of nutrition and physical activity, says, "We should be limiting red and processed meat to help reduce colon cancer risk, and possibly, the risk of other cancers. The occasional hot dog or hamburger is okay."

The American Cancer Society has long recommended a diet that limits processed meat and red meat, and that is high in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. The American Cancer Society Guidelines on Nutrition and Physical Activity for Cancer Prevention recommend choosing fish, poultry, or beans instead of red meat and processed meat.

Avoiding tobacco, getting to and staying at a healthy weight, getting regular physical activity, and limiting alcohol can also help people lower their risk of getting many types of cancer.
IARC published its report online October 26, 2015 in *The Lancet Oncology*.

**Citation:** Carcinogenicity of consumption of red and processed meat. Published early online October 26, 2015 in *The Lancet Oncology*. First author Veronique Bouvard, International Agency for Research on Cancer Monograph Working Group, Lyon, France.

**Reviewed by:** Members of the ACS Medical Content Staff
Getting a good night’s sleep can make a positive difference in many areas of your life and health – from mental alertness and memory to heart health and fighting off the common cold. You might be surprised by all of the benefits of sleep.

**Sleep on it.** Have a problem to solve or decision to make? A small study suggests that a full night’s sleep can improve your thinking skills, such as decision-making.

**Take the edge off.** When you’re tired, your body may be more sensitive to pain. Mildly sleep-deprived people had less pain sensitivity during the day when they increased their sleep time at night.

**Finish strong.** Research suggests that increasing sleeping time can improve overall performance.

**Snooze to lose.** Getting the rest you need may help your diet and exercise efforts. Dieters in a sleep-lab study who were well rested lost more fat than those who were sleep-deprived. When dieters got less sleep, they felt hungrier during the day.

**Give your skin a healthy glow.** Deep sleep is the prime time for the skin to repair itself. In a clinical trial, those who had good-quality sleep had quicker recovery from stressors to skin, such as environmental toxins and sun damage. Poor sleepers had increased signs of skin aging.

**Set the stage for sound sleep:**

- Exercise during the day. It can make your body feel relaxed and tired come nighttime.
- Avoid cigarettes. Nicotine can cause sleeplessness and shallow sleeping.
- Cut out caffeine after your evening meal.
- Hide clocks. After setting your alarm, turn the clock away to avoid the stress of watching each minute pass by.
- Don’t read or do work in bed.
- Stay away from things that upset you before bedtime.
- Try aromatherapy. Breathing in scents from lavender and other essential oils may help you relax and sleep at night.

**Sources:** Cigna
TRY AN EXERCISE CIRCUIT

An exercise circuit (a cycle of 5-6 moves, run a few times through) is a great way to stave off boredom and get a lot done in a short amount of time. You can create your own mini-circuits at home. Ideally, your circuit will include a cardio burst of 1-2 minutes, followed by 3-5 exercises that work various parts of your body.

JUMP ROPE, JOG IN PLACE OR RUN YOUR STEPS: Start with 1 minute and progress to 2 minutes.

10 PUSHUPS: You can modify with knees down if you are having trouble holding a straight body pushup position; remember to keep your palms flat on the floor.

20 CRUNCHES: With feet flat and knees up, legs bent in the air at 90 degrees, straight up, or your favorite variation.

20 HIP LIFTS: Flat on your back, arms down on the ground at your sides with fingertips pointing toward feet, feet flat with knees bent at 90 degrees; press feet and shoulders into floor as you lift your hips as high as you can; lift and lower.

30-SECOND PLANK HOLD: Holding a pushup position; body as a straight line, or with knees down.

10 TRICEP DIPS ON A CHAIR/COUCH: Sit on chair with feet flat and knees bent at 90 degrees; hands at sides, palms pressed into the chair with fingertips facing forward; take one large step with right foot, and join left foot beside it. Bend your arm to 90 degrees as you lower and lift; keep abs tight.

The beauty of exercise circuits is that you can be creative. Mix and match your favorite moves to keep your routine fresh.

Sources: American Heart Association, Cold Weather Fitness Guide
TAILGATE CHILI

Yield: 4 Servings  Time: 30 minutes

Nutrition: 297 calories, 6 g fat, 29 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 6 g protein, 288 mg sodium

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 lb. 95% lean ground beef/chicken/turkey
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium jalapeño, chopped (optional)
- 4 clove fresh garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- 15.5 oz. canned, low-sodium pinto or kidney beans, rinsed, drained
- 14.5 oz. canned, low-sodium diced tomatoes, undrained
- ¾ cup jarred salsa (lowest sodium available)

DIRECTIONS:
1. Cook ground meat and onion over medium-high heat for 5-7 minutes, stirring continuously to break up meat. Transfer to colander and rinse with water to drain excess fat. Return meat to pan.
2. Stir in bell pepper, garlic, chili powder, and cumin, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce to simmer, cover and cook for 20 minutes.
4. Optional: serve topped with low-fat grated cheese, a dollop of fat-free sour cream, and sliced avocado.

Source: American Heart Association
THIS MORNING I SPENT **AN HOUR** ON THE BIKE.  

TOMORROW I INTEND TO START **PEDALING**.