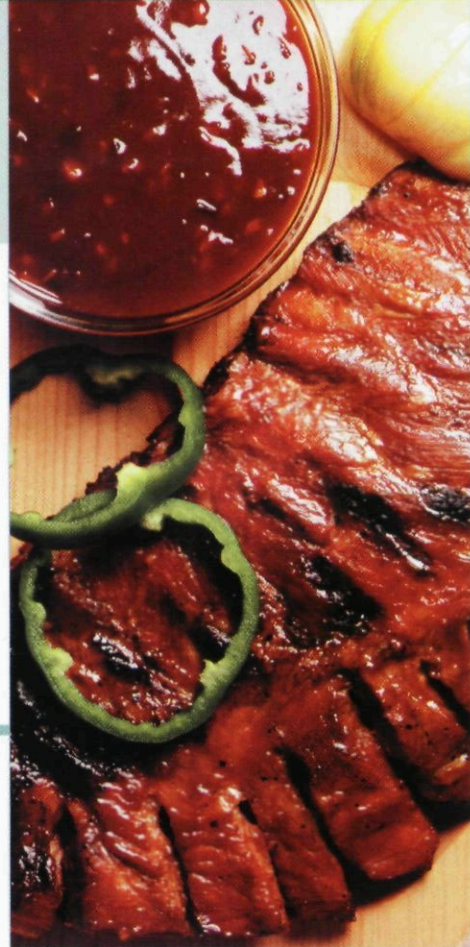


Red and Processed Meats Tied to Pancreatic Cancer



A diet high in red and processed meats increases pancreatic cancer risk, according to researchers at the University of Hawaii and University of Southern California.* Pancreatic cancer is a particularly aggressive, deadly malignancy that can be difficult to detect and treat. Preventive strategies, including dietary modification, are thus vitally important in preventing deaths from the disease. Past studies on the relationship between diet and pancreatic cancer, however, have produced conflicting results.

The investigators analyzed data from the Multiethnic Cohort Study, which enrolled 190,545 African-American, Latino, Japanese-American, Native Hawaiian, and Caucasian men and women between the years of 1993 and 1996. Each participant completed a detailed survey of demographic information, personal and family medical history, diet, and lifestyle factors. By the end of 2001, 482 incident cases of pancreatic cancer were identified among the study participants.

The scientists found that individuals who consumed the most processed meat had a nearly 70% higher risk of pancreatic cancer compared to those with the lowest intake. Similarly, those who consumed the most pork and total red meat had a 50% greater risk of pancreatic cancer than their cohorts

with the lowest intake. The investigators found no association between pancreatic cancer and intake of poultry, fish, dairy products, eggs, cholesterol, total fat, or saturated fat. Intake of total and saturated fat from meat was associated with a statistically significant increase in pancreatic cancer risk, but that from dairy products was not.

Intake of red and processed meat thus appears to increase pancreatic cancer risk, though the investigators believe that fat and saturated fat are unlikely to contribute to an underlying carcinogenic mechanism, as dairy fat was not associated with similar risk. The researchers concluded, "Carcinogenic substances related to meat preparation methods might be responsible for the positive association."

—Linda M. Smith, RN

Reference

* Nothlings U, Wilkens LR, Murphy SP, Hankin JH, Henderson BE, Kolonel LN. Meat and fat intake as risk factors for pancreatic cancer: the multiethnic cohort study. *J Natl Cancer Inst.* 2005 Oct 5;97(19):1458-65.

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