

How much red meat can you eat?

AICR recommends eating no more than 18 ounces of red meat per week. This equals:

- up to 3 ounces (cooked), about the size of a deck of cards, 6 times per week; or
- up to 6 ounces (cooked) 3 times per week.

HOW TO CUT DOWN ON RED MEAT

- Instead of planning dinner around red meat, choose your vegetables and whole grains first, then think of red meat as a garnish or condiment to flavor your meal.



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- In casseroles, soups and stews, cut the amount of red meat in half and substitute beans (rinsed and drained first, if using canned beans) for the remaining amount of meat.
- Enjoy other sources of protein in moderate amounts: fish, poultry, nut butters, tofu and other minimally processed soy foods, high-protein grains like quinoa, eggs and low-fat dairy products.

NEED MORE HELP?

Visit www.aicr.org for more information about diet, physical activity, weight and cancer prevention and survivorship. Or call 1-800-843-8114 to request additional brochures, including:

- *10 Ways to Reduce Your Cancer Risk*
- *The Cancer Fighters in Your Food*
- *The New American Plate*

These and other brochures can be downloaded for free at www.aicr.org. You can also visit the AICR Hotline online for answers to your questions about diet and cancer, or call 1-800-843-8114 Monday–Friday, 9 am–5 pm ET. A registered dietitian will return your call.

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About AICR

OUR VISION: We want to live in a world where no one develops a preventable cancer.

OUR MISSION: The American Institute for Cancer Research champions the latest and most authoritative scientific research from around the world on cancer prevention and survival through diet, weight and physical activity, so that we can help people make informed lifestyle choices to reduce their cancer risk.

We have contributed over \$105 million for innovative research conducted at universities, hospitals and research centers across the country. Find evidence-based tools and information for lowering cancer risk, including AICR's Recommendations for Cancer Prevention, at www.aicr.org.

About the Continuous Update Project

As the U.S. charity in the World Cancer Research Fund network, we contribute to the Continuous Update Project (CUP), an ongoing analysis of global scientific research into the link between diet, physical activity, weight and cancer.

The CUP produces periodic reports on the state of the evidence linking various lifestyle factors to risk of specific cancers. These reports will inform a major update of our Recommendations for Cancer Prevention scheduled for 2017.



THE FACTS ABOUT

Red Meat & Processed Meat

- Eating red meat and processed meat increases risk for colorectal cancer.
- The latest review of all the evidence from the Continuous Update Project, a continuation of AICR's expert report, *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective*, reaffirms the previous evidence about red and processed meat.



THE RECOMMENDATION

Limit red meat

Consume less than 18 oz. (cooked) of red meat a week.

- Red meat includes beef, pork and lamb.

THE RESEARCH

A review of all relevant research has shown that diets high in red meat are linked with increased risk of colorectal cancer.

There seems to be an important threshold: Eating more than 18 ounces (cooked) per week is associated with increased risk, but more moderate intake—less than 18 ounces per week—does not increase risk.

These are some of the ways red meat may increase cancer risk:

- Red meat contains the heme form of iron. This compound can damage the lining of the colon.
- Red meat stimulates the production in the gut of N-nitroso compounds, which are cancer-causing agents.
- Cooking meat at high temperatures (grilling, for example) produces two cancer-promoters: heterocyclic amines (HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

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Processed Meat

THE RECOMMENDATION

Avoid processed meat

Processed meat has been preserved by smoking, curing, salting or adding other chemical preservatives. Processed meat includes:

- sausage
- bacon
- ham
- hot dogs
- pepperoni
- salami
- pastrami
- bologna
- corned beef
- deli/luncheon meats

If you are making healthy choices most of the time and avoiding processed meats, occasionally eating a hot dog at a baseball game or a piece of ham on a holiday is unlikely to be harmful.

THE RESEARCH

AICR's review of the research also found that eating processed meats is linked to increased risk of colorectal cancer.

Unlike red meat, however, no threshold exists: Even low intake of processed meat increases your risk.

These are some of the ways processed meat may increase risk:

- The actual processing of meat often involves nitrites that may form cancer-causing N-nitroso compounds.
- Processing may also involve:
 - smoking, which leads to formation of cancer-causing PAHs; and
 - adding high amounts of salt, which can promote development of stomach cancer.
- Heme iron found in processed red meat may also pose a cancer risk.

HOW TO AVOID

If you are in the habit of eating processed meat, experiment to find healthy alternatives:

Breakfast

- Replace bacon, sausage and ham with other high protein foods such as peanut butter, low-fat dairy foods, eggs or soy versions of breakfast meats.
- Choose whole-grain cereals with low-fat milk or low-fat yogurt topped with berries and nuts.
- Try a smoothie made with fruit and yogurt or soft tofu.

Lunch

- Replace ham or bologna sandwiches with tuna, salmon or leftover roasted chicken, turkey or hummus.
- Trade the traditional sandwich of processed meat for an entrée salad or soup. Add beans, a few nuts or roasted meats leftover from dinner for protein.

Dinner

- Plan your meal around seasonal vegetables, whole grains and protein-rich beans. Then garnish it with a 3-ounce portion of fish, poultry or, occasionally, lean red meat.
- In lieu of traditional pepperoni, try mushrooms or shredded chicken on pizza.
- Chicken, salmon and veggie burgers are a healthy and tasty replacement for hot dogs and other processed meats on the grill.



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CancerPrevention: Together We Can is an initiative of the American Institute for Cancer Research that is dedicated to presenting evidence-based, user-friendly and interactive tools that educate and empower people to reduce cancer risk. Visit www.aicr.org/can-prevent.

AICR Guidelines for Cancer Prevention

The choices you make about food, physical activity and weight management can reduce your chances of developing cancer.

- Choose mostly plant foods, limit red meat and avoid processed meat.
- Be physically active every day in any way for 30 minutes or more. Limit sedentary habits, like watching television.
- Aim to be a healthy weight throughout life.

And always remember—do not smoke or chew tobacco.

You can support AICR's life-saving research and education efforts in a variety of ways:

- Make a donation online at www.aicr.org;
- Write to AICR, 1759 R Street, NW, P.O. Box 97167, Washington, DC 20090-7167; or
- Include a bequest in your will.

For more information, contact our Gift Planning Department at 1-800-843-8114.

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