



Breaking News on the Food and Drink Manufacturing Sector

Harvard red meat study highlights cancer risk

By Mike Stones, 13-Mar-2012

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Diets high in red meat reduce life expectancy through an increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease, according to the results of a new study from Harvard Medical School.

The research, which draws on 28 years of research, involved more than 120,000 people throughout the United States.

The scientists found that adding an extra portion of unprocessed red meat to a person's daily diet increased the risk of death by 13%. An extra portion was the equivalent to two rashers of bacon or one hot dog.

It increased the risk of fatal cardiovascular disease by 18% and of cancer mortality by 10%.

Heart problems

Adding an extra portion of processed meat shortened life expectancy even further. The risk of death rose by 20%, the risk of death from heart problems by 21% and from cancer by 16%.

But replacing red meat with fish, chicken or nuts reduced the risks. The researchers noted: "*We estimated that substitutions of one serving per day of other foods (including fish, poultry, nuts, and legumes, low-fat dairy and whole grains), for one serving per day of red meat were associated with a 7% to 19% lower mortality risk.*"

"We also estimated that 9.3% of deaths in men and 7.6% in women in these cohorts could be prevented ... if all the individuals consumed fewer than 0.5 servings per day (approximately 42g/day) of red meat."

But the results were disputed by Dr Carrie Ruxton of the British Meat Advisory Panel. Dr Ruxton told *The Guardian* newspaper: "*The study was observational, not controlled, and so cannot be used to determine cause and effect.*"

British Heart Foundation

The British Heart Foundation said that red meat could be eaten safely as part of a balanced diet.

The study *Red Meat Consumption and Mortality* was published online by the journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*. To read the report summary click [here](#) .

Meanwhile, in January, FoodManufacture.co.uk reported the results of a Swedish study which claimed eating processed meat, including bacon and sausages, was linked to a 10% increase in the risk of pancreatic cancer.

To read our report, click [here](#) .

More follows.

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