



## CUT BACK ON RED MEAT

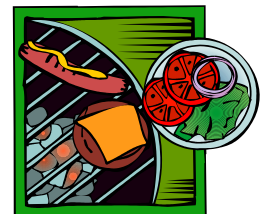
Steak dinners and hamburgers hold a cherished place in the diets of millions of Americans. Yet researchers continue to find evidence that eating too much red meat is probably linked to cancer development. Since research on red meat consumption began in the 1970s, scientists have found that diets high in red meat (beef, lamb and pork) are likely to increase colorectal cancer risk. Two possible reasons for this are that bile acid levels in the colon increase when we eat foods with high levels of saturated fat, as found in red meat, because it takes a longer time to digest and absorb. (That higher bile acid level in contact with the colon walls may promote cancer development.) Also, potentially harmful nitrogen compounds form when we digest red meat.

However, red meat doesn't have to be completely eliminated from your diet to maintain good health. Limiting portions of red meat to no more than 3 cooked ounces per day is advised by the American Institute for Cancer Research's expert report. That amount is about the size of a deck of cards. Three ounces of lean red meat contains about 9 grams of fat. Compared to a 16-ounce steak you'd get at a steak house restaurant, 3 ounces seems small. But small amounts of meat can be satisfying when combined with hearty helpings of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans. You can transition gradually by first reducing portions to 6 ounces of meat, then to 4, then to 3. As you get used to eating less meat, the larger amounts you ate before will seem less appetizing.

### Learn to Stretch a Small Amount of Meat

Many cultures have found creative ways to stretch small amounts of meat as far as possible. Often, meat is viewed as a condiment, not the focal point of the meal. **One suggestion is to mix half the usual amount of ground meat for meatballs or meatloaf with whole grain bread, brown rice or barley as well as grated vegetables (like zucchini, onion and carrots), plus a little lemon juice or tomato sauce and your seasoning of choice. Mashed beans, first rinsed and drained, can be substituted for half the meat.** Or try adding dried, chopped cranberries, apricots or prunes for a different taste. **Small filets of meat can be cubed or chopped so the pieces are big enough for you to enjoy chewing. Stir-fries, stews and casseroles are ideal dishes for mixing diced or chopped meat with vegetables, grains and beans.** Using reduced sodium beef broth in vegetable soup, stew or risotto provides a satisfying meat taste without using any meat at all.

**Remember:** Cooking red meat, poultry and even fish at high heat on the grill or under a broiler creates carcinogens (cancer-causing compounds), especially when it results in charring. To prevent carcinogens from forming, marinate your meat without oil before cooking it, and then wrap it in pierced foil that lets in flavor but protects it from flames.



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