

Lifewire: Research looks at link between red meat consumption, breast cancer incidence

by Ven_Griva

For women, a diet consisting of a regular course of red meat appears to come with a side order of breast cancer, says the American Institute for Cancer Research.

Researchers came to their conclusion after following the health of 35,237 women aged 35 to 69 for an average of eight years in the United Kingdom Women's Cohort Study. The study report was published in the April issue of the British Journal of Cancer.

The women who ate the most red meat had the highest risk of breast cancer, an effect that was seen in both pre-menopausal and post-menopausal breast cancer. It was, however, more pronounced in women who had already experienced menopause.

In the women with post-menopausal breast cancer, those who ate the most red meat - more than 2 ounces per day - were more than 56 percent more likely to develop breast cancer than those who ate none.

Those who ate the most processed meat - more than three-fourths of an ounce per day - were 64 percent more likely to develop breast cancer than those who ate none.

"This new study offers further confirmation of the AICR's standing recommendation to limit intake of red meat to less than 3 ounces per day," said AICR science adviser Ritva Butrum. "If these results are confirmed by other investigations in the future, post-menopausal women may wish to limit their intake of meat, especially processed meat, even further."

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average American eats about 5 ounces of red meat per day.

The women in the study filled out a 217-item food questionnaire. During the study, 395 cases of breast cancer were diagnosed in post-menopausal women and 283 cases in pre-menopausal women.

EARLY START

The statistic is alarming: About one-third of all children in the United States are overweight or, worse yet,

obese.

What's more, obesity can lead to a lifetime of health problems, including: diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke and chronic arthritis.

So, what's a responsible parent to do?

Cindy Cunningham, a nutritionist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, has tips that can help young children start life in a healthy way.

First, help babies avoid weight issues from the start of their lives.

"Even people with a genetic tendency to be overweight can avoid excessive weight gain with good nutrition and exercise," Cunningham said. "Start with breast-feeding and introduce solid foods when the baby is developmentally ready - around 4 to 6 months of age.

"Learn to recognize your child's hunger signs and don't use food as a pacifier."

Other tips:

- Keep portions small and allow children to get a second helping if they are still hungry.
- Keep healthy food and nutritious snack options, such as fruit, stocked in the kitchen.
- Don't give up on offering healthy foods, as it might take several tries before children will accept them.
- Use low-calorie substitutes when cooking meals, such as low- fat cheese and nonfat milk.
- Encourage children to get exercise through physical activity.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Chemicals in cruciferous vegetables - such as broccoli, watercress, cabbage and cauliflower - appear to not only stop human prostate cancer cells from growing in mice but might also cut off the formation of blood vessels that "feed" tumors, says a University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute study.

The study was presented April 17 at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research in Los Angeles.

"The contribution of diet and nutrition to cancer risk, prevention and treatment has been a major focus of research in recent years because certain nutrients in vegetables and dietary agents appear to protect the body against diseases such as cancer," said Shivendra Singh, lead investigator and professor of pharmacology and urology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

Besides broccoli, watercress, cabbage and cauliflower, cruciferous vegetables include arugula, brussels sprouts, bok choy, turnip greens, mustard greens, and collard greens, rutabaga, Napa or Chinese cabbage, daikon, horseradish, radishes, turnips, kohlrabi and kale.

Singh's study concentrated on the phytochemicals - called isothiocyanates, or ITCs - found in these vegetables and generated when they are either cut or chewed. His laboratory has found that phenethyl-ITC in amounts achievable through dietary intake effectively suppresses the growth of human prostate cancer cells.

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