

Frequently Asked Questions: Pork and the AICR/WCRF Second Expert Report

What is the position of the National Pork Board regarding the new American Institute of Cancer Research (AICR)/World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) report?

The published research is clear: Many studies show obesity and the lack of physical activity are conclusive links to many forms of cancer. The report fails, however, to highlight the significant inconsistencies of data around the subject of meat and cancer. In fact, there is no difference in the mortality rate from colon cancer in vegetarians compared to meat eaters.

The report also fails to include all credible studies on the topic. For example, a comprehensive pooling project conducted by Harvard University in 2004 found no link between red meat and colorectal cancer [1], and was not included as part of this report's review.

Established nutrition guidelines, including the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, recommend lean pork can be part of a healthy, well-balanced diet.

Is there any correlation between pork and cancer?

The published data does not substantiate a link between pork and colorectal cancer. Many studies show obesity and the lack of physical activity are conclusive links to many forms of cancer. In fact, there is no significant difference in the mortality rate from colorectal cancer in vegetarians compared to people who eat meat.

Is there any correlation between processed meat and cancer?

The published data does not substantiate a link between processed meat and cancer. Americans can enjoy processed meat as part of a healthy, balanced diet. Several meats, like sliced deli ham, offer low-fat options for Americans to achieve a healthy diet.

Do nitrites in processed meats have any link to cancer?

There are no studies that show a causal link between processed meats and cancer. Nitrite formation is not unique to processed meat. In fact, 95% of nitrates (a precursor to nitrites) come from vegetables and our own saliva. Nitrite is a safe compound approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the important purpose of food safety.

Is it dangerous to eat well-cooked, grilled foods?

Health professionals do not recommend overcooking any protein source. Pork in particular is best cooked to medium doneness, or 160 degrees Fahrenheit internal temperature (slightly pink on the inside). Marinating or basting the pork is a great way to add moisture and flavor to the meat.

Can pork be part of a healthy diet?

Absolutely. Pork can easily be a healthy part of a well-balanced diet. Many cuts of pork are as lean as skinless chicken. Lean pork is a great source of lean protein and many

essential vitamins and other nutrients. A 3-ounce serving of pork tenderloin is an “excellent” source of protein, thiamin, vitamin B6, phosphorus and niacin and a “good” source of riboflavin, potassium and zinc.

Can eating pork lead to obesity?

Actually, lean pork has been shown in research to support weight loss goals.

According to a study published earlier this year in the journal *Obesity*, including protein from lean sources of pork in your diet could help you retain more lean body mass, including muscle, while losing weight. Purdue University researchers found that a reduced-calorie diet with a higher but healthy amount of protein helped overweight women preserve more lean mass while losing weight compared to women who consumed the same amount of calories but ate less protein.

People should listen to the diet and exercise advice of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, which recommend at least 30 minutes of physical activity and consuming an average of 5.5 ounces from the Meat & Beans group daily.

How much pork do Americans eat?

According to government data, actual daily fresh beef and pork consumption is only 1.5 ounces for women and 2.7 ounces for men. Lunch meat and hot dog intake is less than one ounce on average per day. This is notably less than the recommendations of the US Dietary Guidelines, which recommends an average of 5.5 ounces from the Meat & Beans Group daily.

How will this report affect pork consumption?

The National Pork Board supports the goals of healthy weight control and exercise, because many studies show obesity and inactivity are conclusive links to many forms of cancer. We believe Americans understand that balance and moderation with food and exercise are important for long-term health. Pork is not over consumed now, according to government data, actual daily beef and pork consumption is only 1.5 ounces for women and 2.7 ounces for men. This is notably less than the recommendations of the US Dietary Guidelines, which recommends an average of 5.5 ounces from the Meat & Beans Group daily. Based on that data we expect Americans to continue to enjoy pork products.

For more information: <http://www.meatsafety.org/ht/d/sp/i/41359/pid/41359>

1[1] Eunyoung C, Smith-Warner S. Meat and fat intake and colorectal cancer risk: A pooled analysis of 14 prospective studies. Pooling Project of Prospect Studies of Diet and Cancer Investigators Proc Amer Assoc Cancer Res, Vol. 45, 2004.
