



## Eating Red Meat Can Shorten Your Life

When researchers studied half a million people for 10 years

to find out what impact eating red meat had on a person's lifespan, they learned that the more red meat a person ate, the higher the risk of an early death.

In the study, people who ate the most red meat averaged about 4-5 ounces per day. People with a low-meat intake averaged less than an ounce of red meat per day.

Men who ate the most red meat were 31% more likely to die early than were men who ate the least amount of red meat. Women consuming high amounts of red meat had a 36% increased risk of early death when compared to women who ate the least

amount. Diets that were high in red meat and in processed meat shortened a person's life span – not just from cancer and heart disease, but also from Alzheimer's, stomach ulcers, and an array of other conditions.

There are remarkable health advantages from eating less red meat. The researchers estimated that 1 out of every 10 deaths in men could have been prevented if the men had eaten less red meat. In women, researchers

estimated that 1 out of 5 deaths could have been prevented if red meat intake was reduced to low levels. To lower the risk of early death, eat more:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Nuts and nut butters
- Legumes (peas, beans, lentils, soy, tofu)
- Whole-grain breads, cereals, and pasta

In the study, eating poultry and fish resulted in lower mortality levels, as did vegetarian diets. The American Cancer Society nutrition guidelines recommend choosing fish, poultry, or beans instead of beef, pork, and lamb; and also baking, broiling or poaching meat rather than frying or charbroiling it.

### What meat was studied?

All types of beef and pork (yes, it's classified as red meat per the USDA) – including bacon, hamburgers, sausage, steak, hotdogs, and red meat in foods such as pizza, chili, lasagna, and stew.



*Archives of Internal Medicine. March 2009.*

## Try These Simple Stress-Relievers



There are plenty of reasons to be stressed, including economic instability, relationship issues, and work pressures. There

are, however, many positive ways to reduce stress – and cope with the stress you can't eliminate.

First, identify the true source of your stress. Have your attitudes, excuses, or unrealistic expectations brought undue stress into your life? If so, adjusting these will resolve a lot of your excess stress.

Next, discover the ways you cope with stress. Some ways are damaging, including smoking, drinking, overeating, and withdrawing from family and friends.

Other ways are helpful, including:

- Going for a brisk walk every day
- Starting your day with a healthful breakfast
- Calling a friend
- Sitting quietly in a peaceful park
- Soaking in a warm bath
- Journaling
- Getting 7-8 hours of sleep each night
- Limiting caffeine and sugar
- Avoiding alcohol and nicotine
- Meditating
- Doing things you find relaxing, such as painting, dancing, boxing, or playing basketball
- Writing to a loved one
- Talking with a counselor (or a financial advisor if you have money troubles)

The coping methods that work best for you might depend on your gender. A UCLA study found that men and women respond differently to stress. While both sexes experience the initial "fight-or-flight" response, men tend to get aggressive and women tend to seek social interaction. For effective stress release, a man often needs to take a break, go for a run, play a strenuous handball game, or split wood. A woman, on the other hand, might feel better after talking with a friend, cuddling with her spouse or kids, or chatting with classmates in a water aerobics class.

Whether or not you feel stressed, these activities can help you feel happier. If your stress level is high, be sure to set aside some time each day for stress-relieving activities.

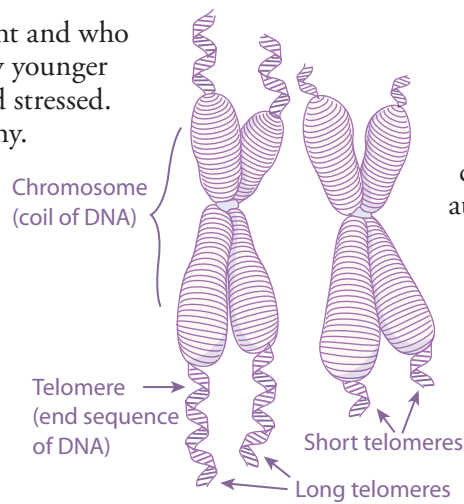
*American Academy of Family Physicians. 2009.*

## Staying Young Longer – It's in the Genes

Women who maintain a healthy weight and who rate their stress level as “low” may stay younger longer than women who are obese and stressed. But you'll need a microscope to see why.

If you could see the chromosomes in the cells in your body, you'd see that each chromosome has a tip – called a *telomere* – that plays an important role in the way your body ages. Over the course of a person's lifetime, all telomeres shorten. Gradually they become so short that they trigger the death of a cell. How you live your life might affect the speed that this happens.

Researchers have found that the telomeres in women who were overweight or obese before or during their 30s, and who maintained that status since those years, had



shorter telomeres than those who became overweight or obese after their 30s.

“This suggests that duration of obesity may be more important than weight change per se,” says Sangmi Kim, PhD, lead author on the paper. “Our results support the hypothesis that obesity accelerates the aging process.” The researchers also saw that high stress levels had a similar or greater effect on a person's telomeres than did obesity. In some cases, high stress levels caused greater damage to telomeres than did smoking or even 10 years of aging. This was seen especially in women who were 55 or older.

To live a healthier life and stay young longer, maintain a healthy weight and cultivate healthy responses to stress.

*Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention. March 2009.*



## How to Get Good Medical Care

If you want the best medical care possible, choose a primary care physician. A recent study of more than 155,000 people found

that patients who had regular visits with a specific doctor were most likely to receive guideline-consistent care and complete recommended preventive exams. Patients who went to a specific clinic but didn't see the same doctor regularly were less likely to receive recommended care.

A physician who knows you well can provide continuity of care, and follow up on past recommendations. For the best diagnosis and care of any medical condition, your healthcare provider needs the best information you can give about:

- ✓ **Your health history**, including what medical procedures you've had done, any illnesses you've had, if you've been hospitalized and, if so, where and when.
- ✓ **Medication you take**, including drug name, dosage, and how long you've been taking it. Also mention any allergic reactions you have had to medicines.
- ✓ **Your family health history**, including cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, mental illness, diabetes, and obesity. Be sure to mention how old your relative was when the health problem developed.
- ✓ **Your lifestyle**, including sleep habits, your diet, and how you cope with stress.

Make (and keep) regular check-ups with your doctor. Have health screenings, as recommended. And if you have any questions or concerns about your health or test results, speak up! You are the most important member of your healthcare team.

*Annals of Internal Medicine. March 3, 2009.*

### Feeling sick?

Here's what your doctor will need to know:

[www.wellsource.info/wn/doctor.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/wn/doctor.pdf)

## ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

**Q:** Whenever I eat a lot of legumes it causes gas, which can be embarrassing. What can I do to make beans less gassy?

**A:** Go to [wellsource.info/wn/ask-beans.pdf](http://wellsource.info/wn/ask-beans.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [wel@wellsource.com](mailto:wel@wellsource.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

**Health Challenge™:** “Walk 40 Miles This Month” available at: [wellsource.info/wn/hc-walk40.pdf](http://wellsource.info/wn/hc-walk40.pdf).

Walking is easy on your joints, helps prevent osteoporosis, promotes heart health, and helps you maintain a healthy weight. If you walk 1.4 miles a day, you'll have no problem completing this challenge.