

[IMAGE]

## Less Meat, Lower Risk

By Editorial Staff

Lower risk of cancer, that is. While no one can entirely reduce their risk of developing cancer, it's encouraging to know that embracing a simple concept like eating less meat can make it less likely. Let's look at what new research suggests when it comes to the meat-cancer link (and we're not just talking about red meat, by the way).

Low-meat and meat-free diets reduce cancer risk, pure and simple. What's a "low-meat" diet? According to a study involving nearly 500,000 adults between the ages of 40 and 70, five servings or fewer week is the magic number. Compared to people who ate meat more than five times per week, cancer risk was 2 percent lower among people who ate meat less than five times per week; 10 percent lower among those who ate fish, but not meat; and 14 percent lower among vegetarians and vegans (no meat or fish).

Specific cancer risks also appeared to be impacted significantly based on frequency of meat consumption: eating meat five or fewer times per week reduced colorectal cancer risk by 9 percent; eating fish, but not meat, reduced prostate cancer risk by 20 percent (31 percent if following a vegetarian diet); and eating vegetarian only reduced breast cancer risk by 31 percent in postmenopausal women. Findings appear in *BMC Medicine*.

The takeaway: When it comes to cancer risk, eating no meat (fish only), or adhering to a vegetarian or vegan diet, is your best bet, but if you can't stay away from meat, limit your weekly intake to fewer than five servings. Need help outlining a diet plan that will minimize your health risks – or turn some of your existing health issues around? Ask your doctor for advice.

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