

[IMAGE]

Red Meat and Diabetes

By Editorial Staff

According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, a branch of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), type 2 diabetes occurs "when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. Blood glucose is your main source of energy and comes mainly from the food you eat." Habitual consumption of foods that elevate blood sugar, particularly refined, white carbohydrates (think white bread, white-flour crackers, sweets, etc. – foods that raise blood sugar quickly and at high levels), can increase type 2 diabetes risk over time.

The higher your blood sugar, the more challenging it is for your body to remove it from the bloodstream. Eventually, it becomes too difficult, leading to perpetually high blood sugar – type 2 diabetes. However, carbohydrates aren't the only macronutrient that can increase diabetes risk. For example, consider red meat, which is high in protein and usually fat – but has no carbs whatsoever. Yet research suggests people who eat red meat may have a higher type 2 diabetes risk than people who eat less red meat.

In fact, people who eat just two servings of red meat weekly appear to have an increased risk compared to people who eat fewer than two servings. The risk is even higher for people who eat more than two weekly servings. Research findings, which appear in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, revealed that every additional serving of unprocessed red meat (think steak) increased type 2 diabetes risk by 24%, while every additional serving of processed red meat (think hot dogs, roast beef) increased diabetes risk by 46%. But there's good news: The researchers also found that replacing red meat servings with non-meat protein alternatives (nuts, legumes, dairy in moderation) *reduced* type 2 diabetes risk.

While this study showed an association between red meat consumption and type 2 diabetes (meaning the former does not necessarily *cause* the latter), it's definite food for thought (pun intended) the next time you go shopping. Buy less red meat, lower your diabetes risk? Seems like an easy decision for your health and the health of your family.

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