

SAFER SUMMERTIME GRILLING

Grilling meat forms two types of cancer-causing compounds: HCAs (heterocyclic amines) and PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons). PAHs are formed when fat from the meat drips onto the charcoal, then rises with the smoke and get deposited onto the meat. They are also formed directly when meat is charred. HCAs form from the cooking of the meat itself at high temperatures.

What's the Risk?

Researchers have found that people who ate beef medium-well or well-done had more than 3 times the risk of stomach cancer than those who ate their beef rare or medium-rare. Also, people who ate beef 4 or more times a week had more than twice the risk of stomach cancer. Additional studies have shown an increased risk of developing colorectal, pancreatic, and breast cancer is associated with high intakes of well-done, fried, or barbecued meat.

What's Safe?

If you eat grilled meats less than once per month, your risk is fairly low. Otherwise, follow the healthier guidelines below when grilling or BBQ'ing meat.

- 1. Change method of cooking** – stewing, steaming and poaching produce very little cancer-causing substances compared to frying, broiling and barbecuing meats.
- 2. Marinate meats prior to cooking** – marinating can reduce HCAs by almost 90%.
- 3. Grill meat in smaller pieces** – small pieces of meat cook faster giving HCAs less time to form.
- 4. Avoid well-done, blackened and charred meat** and don't let flames touch the meat.
- 5. Use a foil drip pan** to prevent the fat from reaching the coals or flames.

Of course, the best approach is to **eat less meat!** Most non-meat foods contain lower levels of cancer-causing substances than meat. Vegetables and fruits can also be protective providing antioxidants and other cancer-preventative substances.

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