

5 Foods to Avoid to Cut Your Cancer Risk



The recent health reports have us saying bye-bye bacon. Here are a couple other foods you should probably avoid and some tips on how you can still eat what you love – even bacon (in small doses)!

So, processed meats are now considered cancer-causing. The good news, according to Ms Jaclyn Reutens, Dietitian at Aptima Nutrition and Sports Consultants, is that you don't have to cut these foods out completely. "The more sensible approach is to limit the amount of processed meats to less than twice a week as a start if you are having it daily and then reducing it further to occasionally."

The problem with processed meats (bacon, sausages, ham, pepperoni, corned beef, etc.) is that they "contain added chemicals such as nitrites and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Nitrites are added to lengthen the shelf life which is also found to be carcinogenic," Reutens says. Instead, try to

eat more lean meats, fish and poultry. (You can find high quality healthy meats and fish [here](http://www.thefinder.com.sg/eat-drink/takeaways/where-buy-quality-fresh-fish-and-meats-singapore) (<http://www.thefinder.com.sg/eat-drink/takeaways/where-buy-quality-fresh-fish-and-meats-singapore>).

What else could we be eating that we shouldn't?

1. Salted, pickled and smoked foods

Many of these contain nitrates and other chemical preservatives to extend their shelf life.

2. Microwave popcorn

There are many rumours circulating the internet about the link between microwave popcorn and cancer. According to [an article on Livestrong](http://www.livestrong.com/article/424792-the-cancer-risk-of-microwave-popcorn/) (<http://www.livestrong.com/article/424792-the-cancer-risk-of-microwave-popcorn/>) written by Kirstin Hendrickson and reviewed by Brenda Spriggs, MD, MPH, MBA, "there is a chemical used in the nonstick coating on the inside of the popcorn bags that decomposes, producing a compound called perfluorooctanoic acid. This chemical has been associated with increased risk of certain cancers, including liver and prostate cancer." The risk is likely low but why risk it when making popcorn is super easy (see below).

3. Foods cooked at high heats

According to [an article on the National Cancer Institute](http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/diet/cooked-meats-fact-sheet) (<http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/diet/cooked-meats-fact-sheet>) website, when foods are cooked at high temperatures (on the barbecue or pan frying) chemicals Heterocyclic amines (HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are formed. (This is true for all kinds of meat and fish, not just processed.) These are linked to some cancers.

4. Soda

It's commonly known that soda does little to help your health but the chemical colouring 4-methylimidazole (4-Mel) used in most sodas (especially dark colas) has been linked to cancer.

5. Canned/tinned tomatoes

Most canned goods contain bisphenol-A (BPAs). However, [according to prostate.net](http://www.prostate.net/2011/nutrition/4-canned-tomatoes-and-tomato-products-worst-foods-for-prostate-health/) (<http://www.prostate.net/2011/nutrition/4-canned-tomatoes-and-tomato-products-worst-foods-for-prostate-health/>), canned tomatoes can be particularly harmful because their high acidity can cause

them to absorb more of these harmful BPAs than other foods.

You can have your bacon and eat it too. (Wait, that's not a saying, is it?)

- Extend the flavour of bacon by chopping one or two slices into small pieces and mixing into rice, quinoa or salads.
- Make your own popcorn. Coat the bottom of a heavy, deep pot with the cooking oil of your choice. Add a few kernels of popcorn and medium heat. When you hear the kernels pop, add the rest of the kernels. When you no longer hear popping, turn off the heat and sprinkle on topping of your choice. (I promise you, this is super simple!)
- Make your own soda. Experiment with all kinds of fruits and herbs and add your favourites to soda/sparkling water. I like lemon and mint.
- Dice your own tomatoes or buy them in a glass jar.
- I hear pickling cucumbers yourself is pretty easy but I haven't gotten that gourmet yet...

By Kathleen Siddell, October 2015

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