



Red Meat Is Health Food

Many health authorities denigrate meat, especially red meat, saying that it will clog arteries, cause cancer, and ruin the planet. In reality, red meat is health food, both for what it contains and what it does not contain, for what it does to the body and for what it doesn't.

Humans have been eating meat for millions of years, from the time in fact before they were really human. The notion that this ancient and preferred food of humans now causes heart disease, diabetes and cancer, doesn't pass the smell test.

Does red meat cause disease?

You have to have been living in a cave for the past several decades not to have heard that red meat is bad for health. What's the reality?

A [recent meta-analysis](#) (study of studies) looked at 20 different studies on the relation between red meat and coronary heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. The review concluded that red meat consumption was not associated with any of these diseases.

[Another recent study, EPIC](#), looked at almost 500,000 people and found no relation between red meat consumption and all-cause mortality.

What about cancer? [A recent analysis](#) found that the "available epidemiologic data are not sufficient to support an independent and unequivocal positive association between red meat intake and CRC [colorectal cancer, the cancer most often claimed to be meat-caused]."

If red meat doesn't cause disease, where does the idea that it's deadly come from?

Some of these studies have found that processed meat is associated with increased health risks, so that's part of the answer. Even if true (which I doubt), that does not mean that red meat such as steaks or hamburgers causes disease.

In any case, who's been eating lots of meat over the past several decades in the face of advice to cut back? That's right, people who ignore all health advice. They're more likely to smoke, be obese, and to consume soda pop and French fries with their meat. These associations were wrongly blamed on meat consumption.

[Americans used to eat far more meat than now, but heart disease was all but non-existent](#). There was also no obesity or diabetes epidemic.

Saturated fat

Red meat contains saturated fat, which is the main reason health authorities want us to limit our consumption of it. The reality is that saturated fat is not only safe, it's healthy.

[Saturated fats are not associated with all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease, stroke, or type 2 diabetes](#), based on a meta-analysis.

[A meta-analysis of prospective epidemiologic studies](#) showed that there is no significant evidence for concluding that dietary saturated fat is associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease or cardiovascular disease. That analysis included nearly 350,000 participants.

Red meat is nutritious

Red meat is a nutritional powerhouse and contains virtually all the nutrients we need, and in the right proportions. Check out the following chart, comparing the nutritional content of beef with spinach, borrowed from [Michael Joseph](#).

	4 ounces of ground beef, cooked	2 cups of raw spinach
Vitamin A		112% DV
Vitamin C		28%
Vitamin E	4% DV	6%
Vitamin K		362%
Thiamin	4%	4%
Riboflavin	12%	6%
Niacin	40%	2%
Vitamin B6	24%	6%
Folate		30%
B12	48%	
Pantothenic acid	8%	
Choline	104mg	11mg
Calcium		6%
Iron	20%	10%
Magnesium	8%	12%
Phosphorus	28%	2%
Potassium	16%	10%
Zinc	52%	2%
Copper	4%	4%
Manganese		26%
Selenium	32%	

Red meat is also loaded with protein and healthy fats, which you can't get from any fruit or vegetable.

Red meat will keep you strong, muscular, and lean, much more than any vegetarian fare could. This is especially important in aging, when muscle loss and obesity become more prevalent and lead to disability and dependence. It's a shame that older people are told not to eat so much meat. [Lack of meat in your diet can and probably will lead to illness, both physical and mental.](#)

In older adults, [meeting or exceeding the RDA for dietary protein is associated with better lean body mass](#) (i.e. muscle), meaning that people who eat enough protein are more likely to thrive and are less likely to become frail.

Red meat doesn't spike glucose or insulin

Red meat also shines for what it does *not* do.

Red meat doesn't spike up levels of glucose and insulin like carbohydrates and sugar do, and therefore is much less likely to cause weight gain.

An increased amount of dietary protein [improves blood glucose control by up to 40% in type 2 diabetics.](#)

We saw above that saturated fat has been cleared of charges that it increases heart disease or death rates.

If saturated fat doesn't cause heart disease, what does? Carbohydrates may be

the answer.

In [a recent study done in Malaysia](#), carbohydrates, but not fat, were associated with heart disease risk. And type 2 diabetes and heart disease [are linked to carbohydrates, but not fat](#).

Red meat contains, for all intents and purposes, zero carbohydrate.

Can man live on meat alone?



Humans have hunted animals and eaten meat for literally millions of years. It doesn't make much sense that the food that enabled people to survive, thrive, and reproduce also causes disease.

In fact, [many people live on a diet of meat only](#), and have found that it's improved their health.

The Arctic explorer Vilhalmjur Stefansson, and another man, volunteered to eat an all-meat diet for a year under medical supervision. [The doctors' report](#) stated, "In these trained subjects, the clinical observations and laboratory studies gave no evidence that any ill effects had occurred from the prolonged use of the exclusive meat diet."

Hormones and antibiotics

One concern many people have about eating red meat is possible contamination by hormones and antibiotics, which are used in modern meat production.

But [the levels of hormones and antibiotics in red meat are nil](#), even with conventionally produced meat. Foods like soy contain orders of magnitude more hormones than red meat.

Meat and the environment

Many people argue that meat is bad for the environment, but others argue that [grazing cows can save the planet](#). They could preserve topsoil, combat desertification, and act as a carbon sink.

Conclusion

The animus against red meat pervades mainstream health advice.

The best thing to do is look at the real causes of modern illness and obesity: sugar, refined carbohydrates, and vegetable oils, all of which processed food contains in abundance. Humans have eaten meat for a very long time, but epidemics of heart disease, obesity, cancer, and diabetes are all of very recent origin.

Red meat forms an important part of a diet based on real, whole foods, not processed junk. Red meat is not merely innocent of the charges against it,

but is crucial for health, strength, and vitality.

PS: My latest book is [Best Supplements for Men](#).



PPS: [Check out my Supplements Buying Guide for Men](#).