

Analysis of published studies links processed meat consumption to breast cancer risk

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Studies on red and processed meat consumption with breast cancer risk have generated inconsistent results. An *International Journal of Cancer* analysis has now examined all published studies on the topic.

Comparing the highest to the lowest category in the 15 studies included in the analysis, processed [meat](#) consumption was associated with a 9% higher [breast cancer risk](#). Investigators did not observe a significant association between red (unprocessed) meat intake and risk of [breast cancer](#).

Two studies evaluated the association between red meat and breast cancer stratified by patients' genotypes regarding N-acetyltransferase 2 acetylator. (Differences in activity of this enzyme are thought to modify the carcinogenic effect of meat.) The researchers did not observe any association among patients with either fast or slow N-acetyltransferase 2 acetylators.

"Previous works linked increased risk of some types of cancer to higher processed meat intake, and this recent meta-analysis suggests that processed meat consumption may also increase breast cancer risk. Therefore, cutting down processed meat seems beneficial for the prevention of breast [cancer](#)," said lead author Dr. Maryam Farvid, of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

More information: Maryam S. Farvid et al, Consumption of red and processed meat and breast cancer incidence: a systematic review and

meta-analysis of prospective studies, *International Journal of Cancer* (2018). [DOI: 10.1002/ijc.31848](https://doi.org/10.1002/ijc.31848)

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