

Charred meat may increase risk of pancreatic cancer

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Meat cooked at high temperatures to the point of burning and charring may increase the risk of pancreatic cancer, according to data presented at the American Association for Cancer Research 100th Annual Meeting 2009.

Kristin Anderson, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, said the finding was linked to consumption of well and very well done meats cooked by frying, grilling or barbecuing. Cooking in this way can form carcinogens, which do not form when meat is baked or stewed.

Anderson and colleagues conducted a prospective analysis that included 62,581 participants. "My research has been focused on [pancreatic cancer](#) for some time, and we want to identify ways to prevent this cancer because treatments are very limited and the cancer is often rapidly fatal," she said.

Anderson and colleagues used information from surveys that were a part of the PLCO (Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian) Multi-center Screening Trial. Participants provided information about their meat intake, preferred cooking methods and doneness preferences.

Over the course of nine years, researchers identified 208 cases of pancreatic cancer. Preferences for high temperature cooked meat were generally linked with an increased risk; subjects who preferred very well done steak were almost 60 percent as likely to get pancreatic cancer as

compared to those who ate steak less well done or did not eat steak. When overall consumption and doneness preferences were used to estimate the meat-derived carcinogen intake for subjects, those with highest intake had 70 percent higher risk than those with the lowest intake.

"We cannot say with absolute certainty that the risk is increased due to carcinogens formed in burned meat," said Anderson. "However, those who enjoy either fried or barbecued meat should consider turning down the heat or cutting off burned portions when it's finished; cook meat sufficiently to kill [bacteria](#) without excess charring. In addition, the precursors of cancer-causing compounds can be reduced by microwaving the [meat](#) for a few minutes and pouring off the juices before cooking it on the grill."

Source: American Association for Cancer Research ([news](#) : [web](#))

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