

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Sept 20, 2007

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PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776
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For many Americans, the best dinner for a special celebration or a casual dinner on the patio is a steak. Thick, juicy, grilled to perfection - yum, yum, yum! But for people concerned about their health, the thought of grilled steak can be torture. There is so much evidence that the fat in red meats can raise our cholesterol levels. The meat itself seems to be linked to colon, breast and prostate cancers. The grilling process creates HCAs, compounds also linked to cancers of the gastrointestinal tract. So, how can you enjoy a steak or burgers with a clear conscience?

By eating plenty of green veggies, especially those the broccoli and cabbage family, and the onion and garlic family, you can really cut your risks. Those vegetables work in several different ways. Broccoli, cauliflower and related vegetables use sulfur to make certain chemicals that disable the carcinogens formed by the cooked meat. Onions and garlic also use sulfur. Their chemicals are slightly different but also effective at disabling cancer compounds.

Chlorophyll is what makes all plants green. Dark green leaves like spinach, or green flowers like broccoli, have lots of chlorophyll. It turns out that chlorophyll also helps protect the lining of our intestines from the effects of the iron in red meats. It's true we need the iron. But in the process of getting through the intestines and into the blood stream, iron from meat can also promote extra growth in colon cells. Uncontrolled extra growth is cancer. So anything that helps control that growth before it goes wild is

a big help.

There's also some evidence that meat iron can interact with estrogen to promote breast and prostate cancers. Diets high in vegetables help to slow that interaction and protect us from the dangerous effects.

Another way vegetables can balance out the risks of cancer is by its high fiber content. Besides being a good "roughage to keep us regular", fiber can latch onto and tie up a lot of things in the intestines. They can bind to certain cholesterol-containing compounds and carry them 'out the other end' before they do us any damage. Fiber also binds up the HCAs, the compounds formed when meat is grilled or blackened. HCAs are known to be carcinogens that damage the DNA of cells, especially the cells lining our colons. When DNA is damaged cancer begins. If fiber ties up the HCAs before it gets to the cells, the damage is prevented.

Meat also seems to promote inflammation in many places in the body. Inflammation in the arteries is a start of plaque that leads to heart attack. Inflammation also creates free radicals. They are the body's way of killing incoming bacteria. But when there's inflammation without bacteria, the free radicals attack our own cells and create cancers. What neutralizes the free radicals? Vitamins, minerals and antioxidants from vegetables!

Put all of these possibilities together and you can see the benefits of lots of vegetables. People who eat lots of garlic and onion are 31% less likely to get colon cancer than those who don't eat these veggies. Eating lots of broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and those related plants can cut your risks by up to 50%. What seems to be a healthy balance is about 3 ounces of lean red meat a day, and 3 cups of more of vegetables and fruits. Sticking to mostly whole grains for your starchy grains will also

help in the fight.

So, balance the red meat with the green vegetables year round and you can still enjoy a steak. Just fill half the plate with broccoli and spinach. Here's a spinach dip to nibble on with carrot and celery sticks while the steak is on the grill. Enjoy!

Tomato Spinach Dip

1 10-oz package frozen spinach	8 oz fat-free cream cheese
1/3 C skim milk	1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper	2 ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped	

Thaw and drain the spinach, then press out excess water. Beat cheese, milk, salt and pepper in mixing bowl until smooth. Stir in spinach, tomatoes and onion. Spoon into ungreased baking dish. Bake in 375° F oven until hot and bubbly. Serve immediately. Serves 8.

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