

August 2010 Newsletter



Tor Hassell is grilling some natural uncured beef hot dogs. He loved operating the heavy equipment but preferred his sardines. Miles is on hand with the antioxidants.

Make mine *real* meat, thanks

You are probably aware that there have been some ugly rumors out there about processed meats. Are they really associated with more cancer, heart disease and diabetes? Is bringing home the bacon really a good idea? Good question. So, let's talk turkey.

For example, there is a very recent paper published in *Circulation*, the flagship journal of the American Heart Association, which should make Subway very nervous.¹ The authors analyzed 20 high-quality prospective trials involving 1,218,380 people in 10 countries, followed for as long as 18 years. Their purpose was to look for a relationship between red meat or processed meats and risk of heart disease or diabetes.

Their findings are sobering for anyone who has bacon, sausages, salami, hot dogs, corn dogs, bologna, spam, ham, or sliced lunch meats in their refrigerator. You may be harboring fugitives. Read on.

It's a knockdown!

- **First**, the researchers found no relationship between heart disease or diabetes and the consumption of unprocessed red meat, based on

an average intake of a little over 3 ounces (100g) daily. This will seem startling to some people, who have been convinced that red meat is associated with heart disease. Recent studies even cast doubt on there being any cardiac risk with eating saturated fats!²

- **Second**, the researchers did find a strong relationship between eating *processed* meats and heart disease or diabetes. For every 50g (a little under 2 ounces) of processed meat consumed daily, the risk of heart disease went up by 42% and the risk of diabetes by almost 20%.

So put the Spam down and back away

This analysis – perhaps the most complete to date – should give us a compelling reason to rethink our consumption of all preserved meats. We recommend avoiding preserved meat most of the time, with the exception of special occasions like February 29th, April Fools' Day, Halloween, and National Hot Dog Day, which is apparently on July 23rd.

On those occasions when you indulge in preserved meats, counter with an antidote of antioxidant-rich food. For example, if you're eating a hot dog at a Labor Day picnic, follow it up with corn on the cob. If you're serving yourself a slab of honey baked ham at a family reunion, find some broccoli or spinach to accompany it. If you are going to have bacon for breakfast, slice up a tomato to fry at the same time. Simple strategies with potential benefits.

Happily for those of us who enjoy grilled sausages or hot dogs, not all of them are in the preserved meat category. Uncured fresh sausages – simply fresh spiced ground meat that has been stuffed into a sausage casing – are easily found at many local stores.

The *Painted Hills Natural Beef* hot dogs in the photograph above have the sort of ingredient list to look for: beef, water, sea salt, honey, paprika, celery, and garlic powder. Yes, uncured meats *do* cost more than their preserved counterparts. So does good bread and good ice cream. Corn syrup is a cheap ingredient!

¹ Renata, M. et al. *Circulation* 2010;121:2271-2283

² Siri-Tarino PW et al. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2010;91:502-09

On the subject of grilling, it's hard to beat the flavor and usefulness of a tri-tip roast or flat iron steak that you can grill, slice and serve, with leftovers good for another meal or two. Even though red meat appears to be perfectly healthy in the context of a varied diet, it is probably wise to avoid eating more than about 500g – a little more than a pound – of red meat weekly, as some studies suggest that cancer risk rises when red meat consumption goes above that level. (American Institute for Cancer Research 2007.)

If you want sliced turkey in your refrigerator for sandwiches, roast a fresh, skin on, bone in, turkey breast until the skin is golden brown and meat is a juicy 160°. Or roast a whole chicken and turn the leftovers into a one-dish meal like *Southwest Chicken Couscous Salad* (page 202 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*); or as a substitute for tuna in *Tuna and White Bean Salad* or *Tuna and Broccoli Pasta* (pages 189-190); or into a batch of *Chicken Salad* (page 105) to enjoy for a few meals.

And remember, even real meat should only take up about one quarter of the real estate on your plate, which leaves lots of room for culinary heroes like vegetables and fruit, beans and legumes, and whole grain foods.

And on the rest of your plate...

The good news is that you can eat all the vegetables you want! Lots of them are tasty raw, a fine quality for a vegetable to have on a lazy summer day – carrots and celery, broccoli and cauliflower florets, cucumbers and tomatoes, either served with dip or tossed in vinaigrette.

Then there are all kinds of great barbecue-friendly salads: Greek, potato, bean or lentil, rice, *tabbouleh*, barley or quinoa, and so on. (See pages 134, 135, 161-66, 176, 178-80 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*). These are especially useful options for at least two reasons: you may discover a vegetarian in your midst, and you are less likely to go back for seconds in meat if you have a plateful of tasty – and filling! – food.

Cookbook department

Check out our cookbook, *Good Food, Great Medicine*, for more ideas on what to bring to your next summer get together. Books are available at www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com as well as Amazon, Powell's Books, Annie Bloom's Bookstore, and Broadway Books.

Good Food, Great Medicine

Fall class series

We are planning another series of free classes to be held at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center on Tuesday evenings from 6 – 8 pm:

- **September 28th**: How a Greek Grandmother Would Solve the Health Care Crisis: Which Diet and Lifestyle Choices Really Matter?
- **October 19th**: Preventing and Reversing Heart Disease
- **November 9th**: Preventing and Reversing Type 2 Diabetes and Insulin Resistance
- **December 14th**: 10 Steps for Evidence-based Weight Loss: Holiday Food Strategies

To register, call our office at (503)291-1777.

Research update

Miles' work with Providence Cancer Center to reduce radiation injury from cancer treatment continues with a random controlled trial for patients getting chest radiation. Thank you for your continued support of this project.

Upcoming Speaking Events

8/23/2010 - Critical Care Update:

Miles Hassell MD: Which Lifestyle Choices Really Matter? PSVMC. *Conference attendees only.*

9/7/2010 – NEXT Steps against Breast Cancer:

Miles Hassell MD: *Nutrition and Exercise Today to Reduce Risk and Improve Survival.* Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, Cancer Center. This event is free. Preregister at the Providence Resource Line: (503) 574-6595

9/16/2010– Providence Cancer Center Integrative Medicine Program: *Making Your Way Through the Supplement Jungle: Vitamins, Minerals and Herbs.*

Miles Hassell, MD and Cindy Reuter, ND, MSOM, L.Ac., RD. Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. The talk is free. For more information, see www.providence.org/integrativemedicine and choose 'classes' link, or call Providence Resource Line @ (503)574-6595.

9/28/2010 – Good Food Great Medicine Series:

Miles Hassell MD: *How a Greek Grandmother Would Solve the Health Care Crisis: Which Diet and Lifestyle Choices Really Matter?* Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. To register, call (503)291-1777.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"

1 Thess. 5:21(KJV)