

RED MEAT MATTERS



Fresh red meat is different to processed meat

Fact **5**

Fresh meat is very different to processed meat. It is important that we understand what these differences are and their impact on our nutritional intake.

Meat

Commonly, people use the term 'meat' to refer to meat flesh (skeletal muscle) only, but the FSANZ definition also includes offal ('meat other than meat flesh' eg brain, liver, kidney, tripe).¹ This definition does not include kangaroo meat, which has become popular in recent times and would be considered by most Australians as meat.

Red meat

In Australia, the term 'red meat' refers to meat from cattle, sheep and goat (beef, veal, lamb, mutton and goat meat).¹ It does not include meat from pigs (eg pork, ham, bacon) or kangaroo meat. In many other parts of the world, including the US, UK and Europe, the term 'red meat' includes pork.

Processed meat

'Processed meat' is defined as meat products with a minimum of 30 per cent meat that has undergone a method of processing other than boning, slicing, dicing, mincing or freezing. Examples of processing methods include: smoking, drying, salting, curing, fermenting and pickling. Processed meats include manufactured meats and cured and/or dried meat flesh such as frankfurts, ham, prosciutto, bacon and salami.¹

It is important to distinguish sausage as commonly referred to in Europe covering a range of fermented and preserved meats from sausages as we consume them in Australia which are made from fresh red meat.

Nutritional differences between 'fresh red meat' and 'processed meat'.

Fresh red meat (including beef, veal and lamb) is a nutrient-dense food. It provides high quality protein and essential nutrients like iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and omega-3s. Contrary to popular belief, lean red meat is not a major contributor to total and saturated fat in the diet.^{2,3} Fresh red meat is a core food in the Australian diet with the Australian dietary guidelines recommending we enjoy lean red meat 3 to 4 times a week.⁴

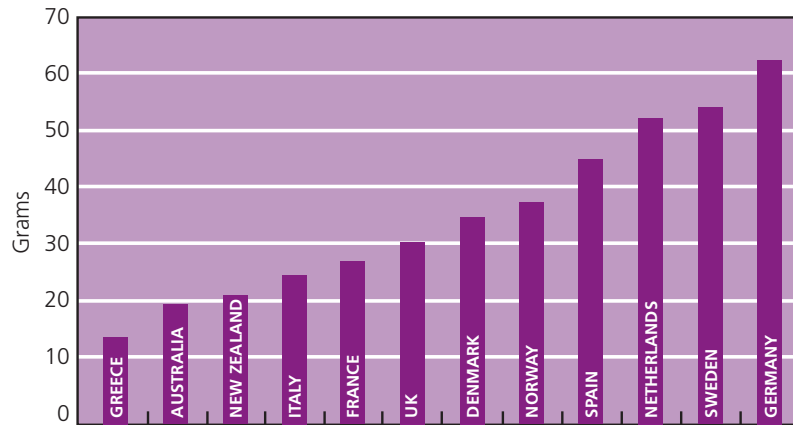
On the other hand, key health organisations such as the Dietitians Association of Australia, the National Heart Foundation of Australia and Cancer Councils all recommend people limit their consumption of processed meats because they are high in fat, salt and nitrates.



Processed meat consumption in Australia.

In Australia, the most frequently consumed processed meat products come from pig meat with 44 per cent of Australians consuming either ham or bacon more than once a week. Red meat tends to be bought as fresh, cooked from scratch and eaten with 4 or more vegetables.^{5,6}

The composition of different processed meats, the types of processed meat consumed and the definition of processed meat vary widely between countries, therefore only an estimated comparison can be made. From 12 countries observed, Australia rates as **second lowest** in daily processed meat consumption.⁷



References:

1. Food Standards Australia and New Zealand. *Food Standards Code*, vol.2. Canberra: Information Australia, 2002.
2. Williams P et al, (2007): "Composition of Australian red meat 2002-3. Nutrient profile," *Food Australia*; 59:331-41.
3. Williams P et al, (2007): "Composition of Australian red meat 2002-1. Gross composition data," *Food Australia*; 58:173-81.
4. National Health and Medical Research Council (2003): "Dietary Guidelines for Australians," Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.
5. *Meat Expectations Study*, (2007), The Clever Stuff.
6. *Eating Behaviour Study*, (2007), Roy Morgan Research.
7. Linseisen J et al, (2005): "Dietary intake of different types and characteristics of processed meat which might be associated with cancer risk - results from the 24-hour diet recalls in the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC)," *Public Health Nutrition*; 9(4), 449-64.

Summary of key points:

	Fresh lean red meat	Processed meat
Definition	Meat from cattle, sheep and goat (beef, veal, lamb, mutton and goat meat).	Meat products with a minimum of 30 per cent meat that has undergone a method of processing other than boning, slicing, dicing, mincing or freezing.
Nutrient Profile	Nutrient-rich with relatively low levels of total and saturated fat.	High in fat, salt and nitrates.
Recommendations	Australian dietary guidelines recommend lean red meat 3 to 4 times a week.	Key health organisations recommend people limit their consumption of processed meats.
Eating behaviour	Bought fresh, cooked from scratch, eaten with vegetables.	Most common processed meats eaten in Australia are ham and bacon.



Meat & Livestock Australia

Locked Bag 991

North Sydney NSW 2059

Tel: 02 9463 9333

Fax: 02 9463 9173

www.mla.com.au

www.redmeatandnutrition.com.au

www.themainmeal.com.au

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) represents the beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat producers of Australia and manages research and development, marketing and promotions on behalf of the industry. MLA has a commitment to providing Australians with accurate nutrition information and promotes the role of red meat as part of a healthy, balanced diet.