

1. Meat, fish and dairy products and the risk of cancer: a summary matrix

MEAT, FISH AND DAIRY PRODUCTS AND THE RISK OF CANCER					
WCRF/AICR GRADING		DECREASES RISK		INCREASES RISK	
		Exposure	Cancer site	Exposure	Cancer site
STRONG EVIDENCE	Convincing			Processed meat ¹	Colorectum 2017
	Probable	Dairy products	Colorectum 2017 ²	Red meat ³ Cantonese-style salted fish ⁴	Colorectum 2017 Nasopharynx 2017
LIMITED EVIDENCE	Limited – suggestive	Fish	Liver 2015 Colorectum 2017	Red meat ³	Nasopharynx 2017 Lung 2017 Pancreas 2012
				Processed meat ¹	Nasopharynx 2017 Oesophagus (squamous cell carcinoma) 2016 Lung 2017 Stomach (non-cardia) 2016 Pancreas 2012
				Foods containing haem iron ⁶	Colorectum 2017
			Grilled (broiled) or barbecued (charbroiled) meat and fish	Stomach 2016	
		Dairy products	Breast (premenopause) 2017 ⁵	Dairy products	Prostate 2014 ⁷
Diets high in calcium	Breast (premenopause) 2017 Breast (postmenopause) 2017	Diets high in calcium	Prostate 2014		
STRONG EVIDENCE	Substantial effect on risk unlikely	None identified			

- 1 The term 'processed meat' in the CUP refers to meats transformed through salting, curing, fermentation, smoking or other processes to enhance flavour or improve preservation.
- 2 The evidence for dairy products and colorectal cancer includes total dairy, milk and cheese and dietary calcium intakes.
- 3 The term 'red meat' in the CUP refers to beef, veal, pork, lamb, mutton, horse and goat.
- 4 Cantonese-style salted fish is part of the traditional diet consumed by people living in the Pearl River Delta region in Southern China. This style of fish, which is prepared with less salt than is used in the northern part of China, is allowed to ferment, and so is eaten in a decomposed state. This conclusion does not apply to fish preserved (or salted) by other means. Evidence is primarily from case-control studies, there is only one cohort study.
- 5 The evidence for dairy products and premenopausal breast cancer includes total dairy and milk intakes.
- 6 The term 'haem iron' refers to iron attached to a haemoprotein, which is found only in foods of animal origin. Foods that contain haem iron include red and processed meat, fish and poultry.
- 7 The evidence for dairy products and prostate cancer includes total dairy, milk, cheese and yogurt intakes.