

'RED MEAT' VERSUS 'WHITE MEAT': WHAT SHOULD ONE EAT?

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1. Which meats are red and which are white?

Meat that can be considered red meat most commonly comes from the flesh of bigger mammals e.g. Mutton, Pork and Beef.

White meat also referred as 'light meat' comes from poultry (chicken) and fish.

2. What is the difference between red and white meats?

As the name suggests red meat is red in colour because of the presence of myoglobin, a muscle pigment, in large amounts.

White meat is white in colour, because the concentration of myoglobin is lower.

3. Are there differences in nutrient content between red and white meats?

Red meat contains higher amount of the nutrients viz. proteins, zinc, iron, thiamine, riboflavin and vitamins B₆ & B₁₂. These nutrients are also present in white meat but in lesser quantities.

White meat is abundant in poly-unsaturated and mono-unsaturated fatty acids like Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids, which help to reduce the 'bad cholesterol' like the LDL and increases the 'good cholesterol' the HDL.

4. Why is consumption of excess quantity of 'red meat' not advisable?

Red meat is associated with many lifestyle diseases especially heart disease because of higher level of saturated fats. Prolonged intake of red meat is also associated with increased incidence of cancers of colon and breast.

5. Does it mean that one need to completely stop eating 'red meat'?

The amount of red meat consumption should be moderate and need not be entirely stopped, as it also has health benefits.

6. Tips to remember.

- (a) Eat a combination of both white meat and red meat. White meat controls calorie, fat intake and has much lesser health risks, while the red meat is richer in nutrients.
- (b) Fish is possibly the healthiest form of white meat.
- (c) Always remove the skin from any white or red meat, as it contains the higher amount of saturated fat.
- (d) Remove any areas of visible fat while preparing meat to further reduce the fat content.
- (e) Make sure the meat is cooked thoroughly to eliminate the risk of food borne illnesses.