

How to Lessen the Cancer Risks When Eating Grilled Meat ***6 Safe Grilling Tips***

Ahh, summer...it's the 4-6 months out of the year that us in the northern part of the northern hemisphere get to enjoy after enduring the other 4-6 months of the year called winter. I tell people that Minnesota is a great place to live in the summer and I honestly wouldn't want to spend April-October anywhere else (December-March is another story! haha).

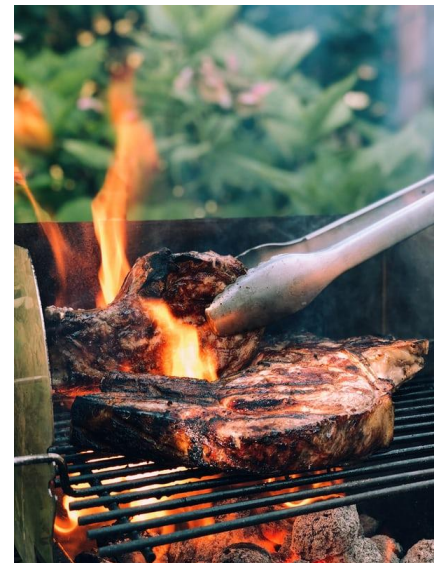
With summer comes things like mosquitoes, biting flies, wood and deer ticks but also days at the beach, long bike rides/walks/runs, trips up north, baseball games, etc. ... and, of course, grilling!

As with grilling an actual piece of meat, grilling itself has two sides. The positive side is enjoying whatever favorite meat, seafood, vegetable, etc. you have going that day but there is a downside to grilling as well. We know that consuming grilled meats regularly increases a person's potential risk for cancer. Specifically, grilling meat causes the formation of carcinogenic compounds known as heterocyclic amines, or HCAs.

HCAs are associated with an increased risk of cancer and the longer you cook the meat, the more HCAs are produced. And charred meat is a sure sign that a good amount of HCAs have been produced.

Fortunately, here are a few grilling tips that can help reduce your cancer risk while still enjoying your grilled meats.

- 1: "Cut meat into smaller portions so they cook more quickly and have a shorter exposure to high cooking temperatures
- 2: Grilling leaner meats with less fat reduces the flames and smoke containing harmful hydrocarbons
- 3: Flip frequently. Fewer HCAs are formed if you turn meat over frequently while grilling
- 4: Marinate. Marinating meat, poultry or fish for at least 30 minutes before grilling can decrease the formation of HCAs by creating a barrier between the meat and the flames and smoke.
- 5: Control the temperature. To avoid cooking meats at high temperatures, light the outside burner and leave the center burner off. Cook the food in the center of the grill.
- 6: Select hardwoods instead of soft woods. Types of wood can influence HCA formation. Hardwoods, such as hickory and maple burn at lower temperatures than softwoods, such as pine. Cooking with wood that burns at a lower temperature is desirable.¹



1. Grisanti, Ron, Functional Medicine University: 6 Safe Grilling Tips-- What You Need to Know. (2021)