# Processed meats linked to increased dementia risk, warns neurologist



A recent public health concern has emerged following insights from US neurologist Dr Baibing Chen, popularly known as Dr Bing. He has warned that the consumption of two widely enjoyed British foods—sausages and bacon—could increase the risk of developing dementia by an estimated 13 per cent. This alarming statistic stems from a study published in the journal *Neurology* earlier this year, which explored the correlation between processed red meat consumption and cognitive decline.

Dementia is characterised by a progressive decline in brain function, predominantly affecting individuals over the age of 65. Symptoms can manifest in various ways, including memory loss, changes in behaviour, and difficulties with mobility. While genetics can contribute to the onset of dementia, research indicates that nearly 45 per cent of dementia cases may be preventable through specific lifestyle changes, prompting health professionals to advocate for a re-evaluation of dietary habits.

Dr Chen shared his recommendations during a video on TikTok, aiming to raise awareness about brain health. He emphasised the importance of moderation concerning red meat intake, stating, “I don't over-consume red meat. Moderation is key and eating too much red meat, especially processed types like bacon and sausage, has been linked to a higher risk of dementia.” He underscored this claim by referencing the aforementioned research, which found that individuals consuming more than a quarter serving of processed red meat daily showed a 13 per cent increased risk of dementia compared to those who consumed less.

The study concluded that higher consumption of red meat, specifically processed varieties, is associated with an elevated risk of dementia and poor cognitive function. The authors suggested that dietary guidelines should consider recommending a reduction in red meat consumption to promote cognitive health.

In addition to advising against the overconsumption of bacon and sausages, Dr Bing pointed out potential benefits of substituting these processed meats with healthier protein sources. He noted, “The study also found that replacing processed red meat with alternatives like fish, nuts, or legumes can lower dementia risk by up to 19 per cent.” Dr Chen further mentioned that to support his brain health, he actively limits his intake of red meat, along with excessive sugar and ultra-processed food products.

Echoing Dr Chen's concerns, the NHS has also outlined practical lifestyle adjustments to help mitigate the risk of dementia. These include maintaining a balanced diet, achieving and sustaining a healthy weight, participating in regular physical activity, adhering to recommended alcohol consumption levels, quitting smoking, monitoring blood pressure, remaining socially active, and avoiding inactivity.

Anyone exhibiting signs of dementia, or those concerned about cognitive health, are advised to consult a general practitioner for evaluation and guidance.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.anabelmagazine.com/news/81099/8-gjera-te-zakonshme-qe-po-dobesojne-shendetin-e-trurit-tuaj/eng> - This article mentions Dr. Chen's warnings about the impact of excessive red meat consumption on brain health, highlighting moderation as a key principle to avoid increasing dementia risk.
* <https://www.yourtango.com/health-wellness/everyday-things-weaken-brain-neurologist> - The article discusses Dr. Chen's advice on limiting red meat intake to protect brain health, aligning with his recommendation for moderation.
* <https://www.alz.co.uk/media/385492/what-causes-dementia.pdf> - This document from Alzheimer's Research UK discusses the impact of lifestyle factors on dementia risk, including diet.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia-prevention/> - The NHS provides guidance on lifestyle changes to reduce dementia risk, including dietary adjustments and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
* <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia> - The World Health Organization outlines dementia risk factors and preventive measures, including dietary changes.
* <https://academic.oup.com/ajcn/article/102/2/545/4664511> - This article discusses the association between dietary patterns and cognitive decline, supporting the idea that dietary adjustments can influence dementia risk.
* <https://www.mylondon.news/news/health/im-neurologist-avoid-two-foods-31356466> - Please view link - unable to able to access data