



FOOD MATTERS

with Culinary Nutritionist Sue Radd

WHY YOU SHOULD REDUCE THE AGEs IN YOUR FOOD

Certain chemicals formed in your cooking give food a more desirable taste and smell, but could they be making you sick? The answer may surprise you.

Research shows that chemicals called AGEs (advanced glycation end products) promote chronic, low-grade inflammation in your body and can lead to a variety of premature diseases. While your body makes AGEs internally, if you eat a modern, high-heat-processed and animal protein-rich diet, you may be adding significant fuel to the fire without realising it.

The adverse effects of AGEs suggested so far include the stiffening of blood vessels, a dysfunctional heart, kidney disease, accelerated ageing and earlier diabetic complications affecting the eyes, nerves and kidneys.

AGEs in food

In general, foods that contain the highest levels of AGEs are animal products such as meat, chicken, fish and cheeses such as parmesan and cheddar that are both aged and high in fat. High-fat spreads include butter, margarine, cream cheese and mayonnaise. Milk and plant foods such as legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables contain the lowest amounts.

How you cook food is important. High heat and dry cooking methods like

grilling, frying, roasting, toasting and barbecuing all accelerate the formation of AGEs.

For example, dry heat promotes AGEs formation by 10- to 100-fold! So it's no surprise that even lean-grilled chicken fillets or pan-fried trimmed steaks are loaded with AGEs. In the plant food category, crackers, chips and biscuits can contribute high levels. If you snack on these foods. Indeed, biscuits have 10 times more AGEs than bread.

You can significantly reduce the amount of AGEs by the way you choose to cook your food or have it prepared for you.

three ways to reduce AGEs

- ▶ Use moist cooking methods such as steaming, poaching, stewing and boiling.
- ▶ Cook over a low heat.
- ▶ Marinate foods in acidic liquids such as lemon juice or vinegar before cooking.

People who regularly eat foods with minimum amounts of meat and cheese and that have been cooked with moist heat (such as soups and stews) can cut their daily intake of AGEs in half.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.