



## the arthritis–red meat connection

*Research demonstrates that a vegetarian diet is still the best way to go.*

People who consume a high level of red meat may be placing themselves at risk of rheumatoid arthritis, according to breaking research published in *The Journal of Arthritis and Rheumatism*.

Eating meat daily was linked with a twofold risk of developing arthritis, compared to eating it less, say, twice a week.

### What is arthritis?

Rheumatoid arthritis is an inflammatory disease, which causes pain, stiffness and inflammation in the joints. It is the greatest single cause of disability and chronic pain in Australia and New Zealand.

While the exact cause is unknown, it appears to be triggered by environmental factors. Lifestyle is thought to account for about 40 per cent of the risk. A pro-inflammatory diet seems to be the driving force.

### What are the risk factors?

While previous studies have shown that smoking, greater coffee consumption and a low level of fruit

intake, as well as vitamin C, are associated with the development of the disease, a link to red meat is a world-first for researchers.

### How can I be protected?

An anti-inflammatory diet, rich in antioxidants, may be the key to preventing and managing arthritis.

- **Fish and fish oils** protect, because of their omega-3 fats. (Use plant sources such as walnuts and linseeds if you are vegetarian.)
- **Cooked vegetables and cruciferous vegetables**—broccoli and cabbage—provide a strong, antioxidant defence.
- **Vegan, vegetarian and Mediterranean diets** help ease symptoms, improving vitality and physical function for those already having the disease.
- **Extra-virgin olive oil** used in cooking and salad dressing shields against inflammation and supplies antioxidants. (Use it as a replacement for polyunsaturated vegetable oils.)

See **page 48** for a delicious, anti-inflammatory recipe!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact *Sanitarium Nutrition Service*

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