

Animal fat linked to high risk for ovarian cancer

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Monday Sept 10, 2012 ([foodconsumer.org](http://www.foodconsumer.org)) -- A study published in Jan, 2012 in British Journal of Cancer essentially suggests that eating too much of eggs and meat or drinking too much whole milk may increase risk of ovarian cancer in women.

Ovarian cancer is expected to be diagnosed in 22,280 women this year in the United States and the disease is poised to kill 15,500 women in the same year, according to the National Cancer Institute.

The study showed women whose intake of animal fat was in the highest quintile were 30 percent more likely to be diagnosed with ovarian cancer, compared with those having the lowest intake.

Animal fat and meat are believed to increase risk by influencing estrogen activity and blood concentrations of insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1), a hormone that has been known to increase risk of several cancers, including ovarian cancer.

The study led by M M Blank of the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health in Rockville, MD and colleagues was based on data from participants enrolled in the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study. During an average 9-year follow-up, 695 incident ovarian cancer cases were identified through the state cancer registry database.

The researchers found women in the highest quintile of total fat intake were 28 percent more likely to develop ovarian cancer, compared with those in the lowest quintile. Women in the highest quintile of animal fat intake were found at 30 percent increased risk for the disease, compared with those in the lowest quintile.

The association was not observed for fats from plant sources. Saturated and monounsaturated fat intakes were not associated with the risk either. However, polyunsaturated fat intake was weakly associated with increased risk for the disease.

The association between total fat intake and ovarian cancer risk was found stronger in women who were nulliparous (never having given birth) or never used oral contraceptives.

The researchers concluded "Fat intake, especially from animal sources, was related to an increased risk of ovarian cancer. The association may be modified by parity and oral contraceptive use, which warrants further investigation."

Animal fat comes with meat and dairy products. The study could mean that eating meat, eggs and drinking milk may be associated with increased risk of ovarian cancer. It is known that meat and dairy protein is a good fuel for the cancer progression.