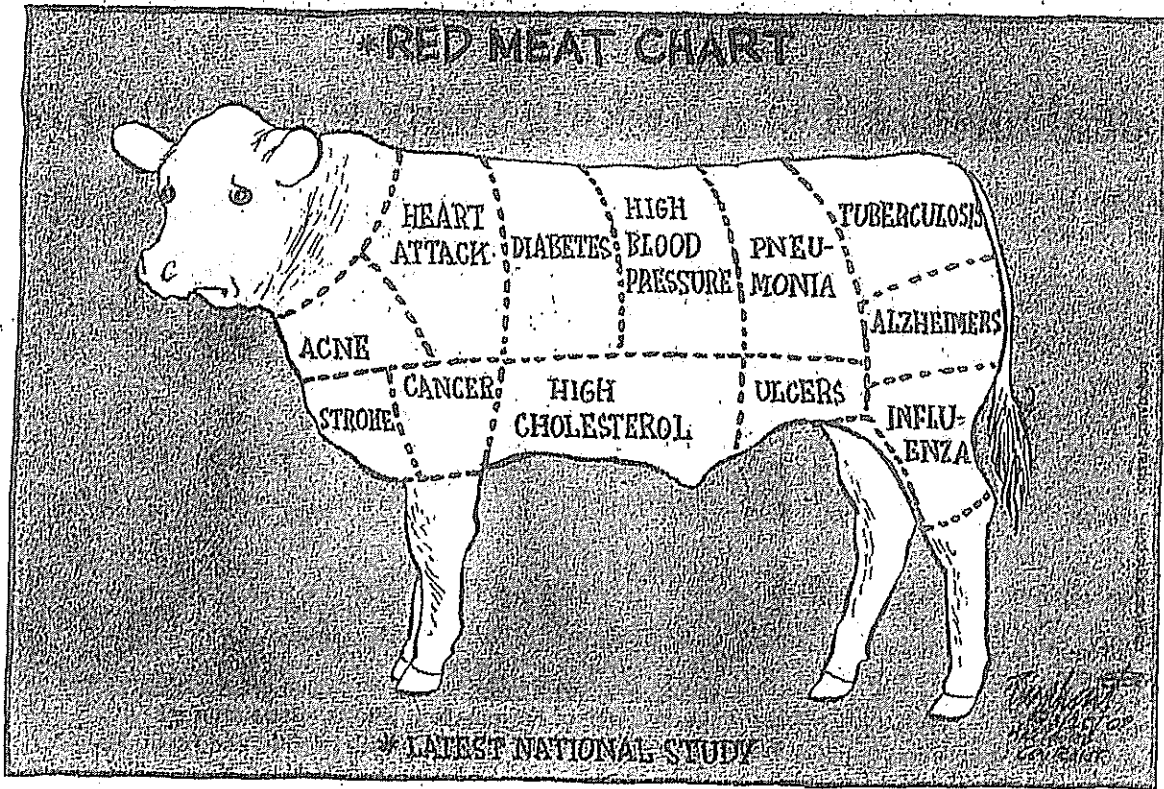


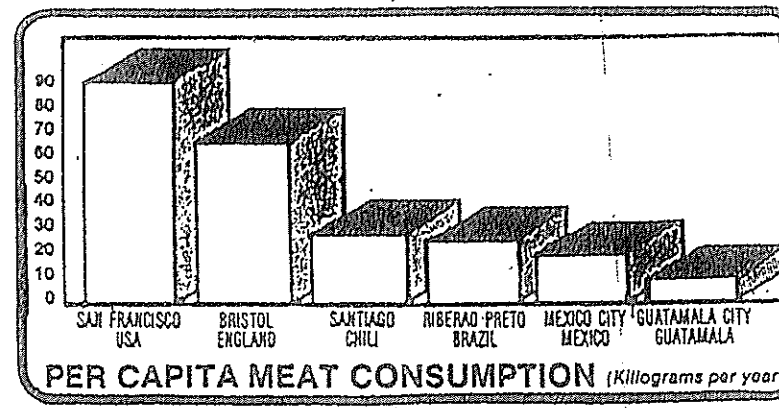
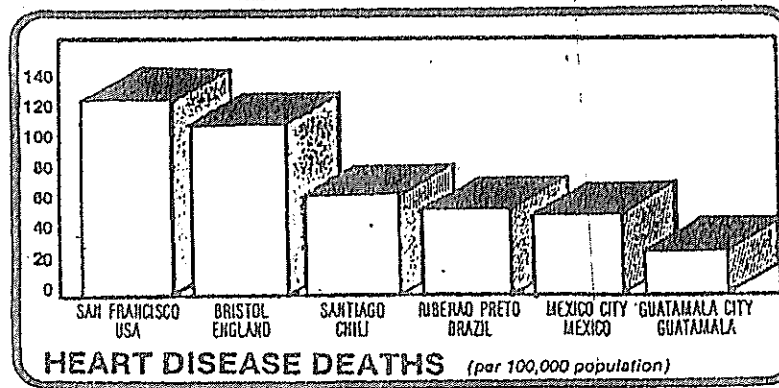
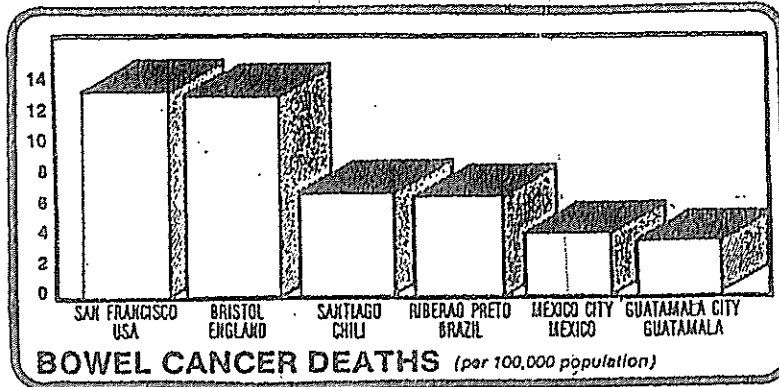
— RED MEAT —
CHART



MORE MEAT →
A DIET FOR A NEW AMERICA

261
MORE DISEASE

THE PATTERN IS REMARKABLY PARALLEL



Data adapted from: *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, Vol. 51, No. 6, Dec. 1973; and, *Foreign Agricultural Circular - Livestock and Meat*, U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C., 1970

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Study: Diet including meat costs health care billions

By N.Y. Times News Service

A group of doctors, after reviewing earlier studies of meat consumption and disease, has published a report arguing that the yearly national health care costs of eating meat are comparable to the estimated \$50 billion spent each year to treat illnesses related to smoking.

A spokesman for the American Medical Association, however, said he had "very serious reservations" about the methods used to come to those conclusions.

The authors of the analysis, Dr. Neal D. Barnard, Dr. Andrew Nicholson and Jo Lil Howard, are all members of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, an organization in Washington that promotes vegetarianism.

They linked regular consumption of red meat and poultry in particular to significant increases in the risks of developing high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, gallbladder disease, overweight and resulting osteoarthritis, food poisoning and cancers of the colon, lung, ovary and prostate.

The analysis was published in the current issue of Preventive Medicine, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Health Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to research on preventive health measures. The researchers estimated the health costs of the nation's current omnivorous diet at \$28.6 billion to \$61.4 billion a year.

In an accompanying editorial, Dr. Randall White, a psychiatrist in Atlanta, and Suzanne Havala, a registered dietitian, said "the money we spend to treat these conditions, often called diseases of affluence or overnourishment, could help meet the basic health care needs of those currently uninsured."

The report comes at a time when

national nutrition and health experts are urging Americans to reduce their dependence on meat. The Eating Pyramid issued several years ago by the federal Department of Agriculture suggests two to three servings daily of a high-protein food like meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts.

It defines a serving as only two to three ounces of cooked meat, fish or poultry.

In preparing their analysis, the authors examined studies of large groups of people in the United States whose living habits were comparable except for their meat consumption patterns. Most of the studies involved Seventh-Day Adventists and Mormons.

However, Dr. Roy M. Schwarz, group vice president for professional standards of the American Medical Association, said the study did not specify whether factors like age, sex and genetic history of the people covered in the studies had been taken into account. All such factors could affect health.

11-27-1995

BUTLER EAGLE

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Could diet attack bones? It's a beef about meat

BY DOUGLAS FOX

Meat
chicken
cheese
cause
Bone-
Loss
(osteoporosis)

Few crises of old age are as widely feared as a broken hip. A calcium-poor diet, lack of exercise, and, in older women, loss of estrogen can all contribute to osteoporosis, which weakens bones. But those factors don't fully explain the 350,000 hip fractures each year in the United States, researchers say. They suspect a surprising new culprit: Americans may be washing away their bones in a tide of acid, made as their bodies metabolize protein-rich foods like meat and cheese.

Endocrinologist Deborah Sellmeyer of the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF) will publish some of the latest evidence early next year. She divided more than 9,000 women 65 and older into five groups according to the overall acid load of their diet and found that women in the most acidic group suffered hip fractures 3.7 times more often than those in the least acidic group during the study's seven-year period.

It's too early to be sure that a diet rich in meat and cheese is bad for your bones, says Robert Heaney, an endocrinologist at Creighton University in Omaha, although he calls it "an interesting and provocative hypothesis." But clinicians including Uriel Barzel of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, N.Y., already think that people worried about osteoporosis should replace some of their acid-producing animal foods with fruits and vegetables. "Once you take estrogen out of the picture for women," says Barzel, "I think second in importance is dietary acid."

Looting the bones. Our kidneys ordinarily regulate the acidity of our blood by dumping excess acid in the urine, but the typical, protein-rich American diet overloads them. Protein contains sulfur,

which our livers turn into sulfuric acid. The body has to neutralize some of it—by looting the bones. They're composed primarily of calcium phosphate and calcium carbonate, which are excellent bases for neutralizing acids. "An acidic environment actually stimulates cells called osteoclasts, which resorb bone mineral," explains David Bushinsky, a nephrologist at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. Over many years, this process could weaken the bones.

Calcium-rich foods can help the body make up for some of the loss, but a growing number of doctors think fruits and vegetables can also help, because they produce acid-neutralizing bases.

Anthony Sebastian of UCSF recently surveyed diet and hip fracture rates in 33 countries. He found "an absolutely phenomenal correlation," he says: Differences in the ratio of plant to animal food accounted for 70 percent of the variation in fracture rates.

Don't just load up on rice and pasta, though; grains actually generate a fair amount of acid. Instead, says Sebastian, focus on fruits and vegetables that are rich in potassium, such as bananas, apricots, and spinach. Potassium generally goes with base-producing compounds,

he explains. Oranges and tomatoes are fine; you may think of them as acidic, but they come out far on the basic side once metabolized.

And what about dairy foods, with their high calcium content? There, researchers are in a bind. While milk and yogurt are almost neutral, hard cheeses are among the most acid-producing foods. "We advise increased dairy intake for women," says Sellmeyer. "The question is, are we giving them extra calcium but potentially also giving them extra acid? I think it's something we need to look into." •

Gnawing on bones

Protein-rich animal foods load the blood with acid, which the body may neutralize by stealing minerals from bone. Fruits and vegetables counteract dietary acid.

	Acid load*
Parmesan cheese	34.2
Reduced-fat cheddar	26.4
Egg yolk	23.4
Beef, lean	7.8
Spaghetti	6.5
Whole milk	0.7
Broccoli	-1.2
Apples	-2.2
Oranges	-2.7
Tomatoes	-5.5
Spinach	-14.0

*Index of acid-forming potential per hundred grams. Source: Thomas Remer and Friedrich Manz, *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.