



## Health & Nutrition Update August 2008

For the past few years in our ongoing efforts to provide our readers with credible information from the health and nutrition resources we are monitoring, we occasionally encounter information that is better communicated from the original author. The following article by Dr. Joseph Mercola, a secular medical doctor, is just one of those cases. (It can be found at his website <<http://tinyurl.com/68wao2>>) This particular subject concerns the ingestion of one of the most clearly defined unclean items of the food lists of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, confirming once again that the kosher eating habits that we highly recommend from the Scriptures are what prudent medical science is discovering and recommending.

Below is a scientific article that discusses some of the great dangers of eating pork, even pork that has been raised in a supposedly "sanitary" environment.

### **Are There Deadly Superbugs in Your Pork?**

Scientists have detected antibiotic-resistant bacteria in pork, pigs and some veterinarians. It is possible that these so-called superbugs could infect farmworkers or even people who eat pork.

Antibiotic-resistant bugs were found in more than 7 percent of over 100 swine veterinarians tested. The same bacterial strains were found in nearly 50 percent of 300 tested pigs.

Perhaps of greatest concern, the bacteria were also found in 10 percent of more than 200 samples of ground pork and pork chops collected from four Canadian provinces.

An estimated 18,650 deaths a year in the U.S. are estimated to be caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

### **Dr. Mercola's Comments:**

*(If you're still not convinced of the benefits of avoiding pork, I advise you to keep reading.)*

Pork is actually good meat from a biochemical perspective, but I believe there is more than enough scientific evidence to justify the reservations or outright prohibitions in many cultures against consuming it.

Pigs are scavenger animals and will eat just about anything. Their appetite for less-than-wholesome foods makes pigs a breeding ground for potentially dangerous infections. Even cooking pork for long periods is not enough to kill many of the retroviruses and other parasites that many of them harbor.

**This is why my eating plan recommends consciously avoiding pork whenever possible.**

Granted, the occasional consumption of pork might be fine, but it's a risk, and the more you consume it the more likely it is that you will acquire some type of infection, because as I will show you, the antibiotic-resistant bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is NOT your only potential health hazard.

### **Scientific Backing for the Avoidance of Pork**

Bacon, perhaps one of America's favorite breakfast staples, is in fact one of the worst type of processed meats you could eat for your health. According to a 2006 study, published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, eating bacon five or more times a week was linked to increasing your risk of bladder cancer by 59 percent. Aside from the processing of the meat, another likely cause for bacon's negative influence on your health is the heterocyclic amines that form when meat is cooked at high temperatures.

If you cook meat that is loaded with pesticides and hormones at high temperatures, you're simply asking for trouble. **That's why I limit my meat choices as much as possible to grass-fed and organic meats.**

You also need to beware of eating undercooked pork, as it can cause trichinosis. Fortunately, trichinosis affects only 11 people per year in the U.S. and less than 2 percent of those infected actually die from the disease, which means there is one death every five years in the U.S. from this.

As far as MRSA is concerned, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have previously warned consumers about the risks inherent in the ever-popular holiday ham in their Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Turns out the high salt and sugar content of pre-cooked canned hams provides an ideal growth medium for the *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria.

Additionally, if you're a diabetic or if you have a weakened immune system, you may also do well to steer clear of chitterlings, a dish consisting of boiled pig intestines that are served up as traditional holiday fare in the Southern U.S.

It's possible for people with poorly controlled diabetes to become seriously ill with enteritis necroticans, a potentially life-threatening intestinal infection. The rare disease causes severe stomach pain, vomiting of blood and low blood pressure. The culprit is the chitterlings-contaminating bacterium known as *Clostridium perfringens* type C, which produces a toxin that is lethal to tissue in your digestive tract. Even cooking the chitterlings might not rid them of the bacteria.

But wait, there's more!

## The Unsavory Side of Pork

The pork and swine industry has been continually plagued, and continues to be so to this day, by a wide variety of hazardous and deadly infections and diseases, including: "Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome" or PRRS -- A horrendous disease, which I first reported on in 2001, but which had been a nightmare for many nations since the mid-1980s, is still alive and kicking today. At one point referred to as "swine mystery disease," "blue abortion," and "swine infertility," the disease was finally named "Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome" (PRRS), and may afflict about 75 percent of American pig herds.

The PRRS virus primarily attacks the pig's immune system, leaving its body open to a host of infections, particularly in the lungs. Initial research revealed that the virus was transmitted via semen, saliva and blood, leaving pigs herded closely together and transported in close quarters by trucks more susceptible to infection. However, according to new research presented at the 2007 International PRRS Symposium shows that the disease is now airborne, making eradication efforts very difficult. According to the PRRS Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) and the National Pork Board, it is still the most economically significant disease of swine in the U.S.

The Nipah Virus – Discovered in 1999, the Nipah virus has caused disease in both animals and humans, through contact with infected animals. In humans, the virus can lead to deadly encephalitis (an acute inflammation of your brain). I originally reported on this virus in 2000, but according to CDC data, the Nipah virus reemerged again in 2004. Hepatitis E (HEV) – According to the Mayo Clinic and an article in the *Journal of Clinical Biology*, pork may be the reservoir responsible for sporadic, locally acquired cases of acute hepatitis reported in regions with relatively mild climates as HEV has been found to transmit between swine and humans. Porcine Endogenous Retrovirus (PERV) – According to a study in the journal *Lancet*, this virus can spread to people receiving pig organ transplants, and according to test tube studies, PERV strains does have the ability to infect human cells. PERV genes are scattered throughout pigs' genetic material, and researchers have found that pig heart, spleen and kidney cells release various strains of the virus. Menangle Virus –

In 1998, the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases* reported that a new virus infecting pigs was able to jump to humans. The menangle virus was discovered in August 1997 when sows at an Australian piggery began giving birth to deformed and mummified piglets.

## What About Pasture-Raised Pork?

In a slightly ironic twist, I can't even safely recommend consuming pasture-raised pork, because while researching this article I stumbled across a study in the current issue of *Emerging Infectious Diseases* citing concerns about pastured pigs being vulnerable to *Trichinella spiralis* infection, due to their exposure to wild hosts that carry the disease.

Pasture-raised pig farming has expanded with increased demand from health conscious consumers, and currently there are 28 U.S. farms located within 50 kilometers of a previously infected site.

If for whatever reason you still want to continue buying pasture-raised pork, I'd advise you to at least take a look at the CDC map, which details areas where outbreaks have occurred, to avoid purchasing meat from a potentially unsafe location. **Other than that, I would simply recommend you avoid pork altogether, even organic pasture-raised versions.**

As noted often in the above article by Dr. Mercola, you are what you eat. Or perhaps in this case, you are what you are eating has eaten!

Wisely choose health and nutrition...

Mark and Margaret

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