

Bacon Myths, Busted: Contrary to popular belief, it's not that bad for you



Bacon is a rather personal taste, and people get really defensive about it—whether someone likes it extra crispy or thick and fatty says a lot about who they are as a person.

But regardless of preferences, when the World Health Organisation linked the consumption of processed meats to cancer in 2015, people freaked out and starting spewing a lot of nonsense about the beloved breakfast meat. Those of us who still cling to our adoration, therefore, are plagued by misinformation and wishful thinking—so we did some digging for you to divulge the truths. Here are five bacon myths, busted.

1. Bacon is high in calories

False. An average piece of regular sliced bacon contains about 40 calories—how you cook it, of course, is up to you. In fact, a slice of Applegate bacon has just 30 calories.

2. Bacon's preservatives will be the death of you

Yes, bacon's got a lot of preservatives. No, they're not necessarily bad for you. In fact, preservatives like sodium nitrate help keep bacon safe from food-borne illnesses like botulism, kill bacteria and keep it from spoiling. Your body produces nitrates naturally, and nitrates are also present in the majority of green, leafy vegetables. It's not nitrates that are the issue, but their potential to turn into cancer-inducing nitrosamines.

But if it makes you feel better, the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulates bacon and the preservatives used to cure it to ensure it's all safe for consuming. The FSIS even requires the addition of ascorbic acid to bacon to prevent the formation of harmful chemicals, and Vitamins C and E combine to significantly lessen the chances of nitrosamine production. If you don't buy it, you can still get yourself some nitrate-free bacon.

3. Bacon boosts your cholesterol to dangerous levels

Here's the thing: Foods with high amounts of cholesterol do not actually *cause* high cholesterol. In fact, whole grains have a much more major connection with raising cholesterol.

4. Bacon fat will make you fat

Sure, bacon can have a high fat content, but it's no more or less fattening because of it. Three major points here: For one, calories are calories, and we know bacon doesn't have a ton of 'em. Secondly, the body's main fat-producing macronutrient are carbohydrates, *not* fat. And thirdly, eating fat has tons of health benefits anyway, like keeping the brain functioning, boosting the immune system and helping the lungs work.

5. Turkey bacon is better for you

Contrary to popular belief, turkey better is not always a healthier alternative to pork. This depends on the cut of poultry. For example, if dark meat and skin are used to make bacon, there will be a higher calorie and fat count, and if lean turkey is used, it may be higher in sodium to boost flavor.