Processed meat link to asthma

**Louis Emanuel**

December 21 2016, 9:00am, The Times

Processed meat may be exacerbating the symptoms of asthma, according to new research.

A study carried out in France suggests that the preservative nitrate, which is used to cure and preserve sausages, bacon, salami and ham, could be linked to an increase in breathlessness and chest tightness, among other symptoms.

The study, published in *Thorax*, took in a health and diet survey of 1,000 people spanning a decade from 2003 to 2013, and concluded that more than four portions of processed meat a day could be detrimental.

About half of the people surveyed were asthma patients, while half had no history of the condition. Higher meat consumption by asthma sufferers was linked with a worsening of their condition.

Researchers stressed that the link is still unproven and added that a balanced diet was the best approach for health.

Erika Kennington, the head of research at Asthma UK, said: “Although certain foods can be triggers for allergies in some people, there is no specific dietary advice to manage asthma symptoms generally.

“For most people with asthma, healthy eating advice is exactly the same as it is for everyone else: follow a balanced diet that includes plenty of fresh and unprocessed food and is low in sugar, salt and saturated fat.”

The World Health Organisation warned in October last year that a daily 50g portion of processed meat increases the risk of bowel cancer by 18 per cent.