# **Red Meat Tied to Diverticulitis Risk**

By NICHOLAS BAKALARJAN. 12, 2017

Diverticulitis, inflamed pouches in the lining of the digestive tract, can lead to severe pain and may even require surgery. Now a new study suggests that one cause of diverticulitis may be eating red meat.

Researchers used data on 46,461 male health professionals in a continuing study that began in 1986. Periodically since then, the men have reported data on lifestyle factors, medical history and diet, including their consumption of red meat, chicken and fish, and how much was processed red meat like salami or hot dogs.

By 2012, they found 764 cases of diverticulitis. The [study is in Gut.](http://gut.bmj.com/content/early/2017/01/03/gutjnl-2016-313082.full)

After controlling for other health and lifestyle factors associated with the disorder, they found that compared with those in the lowest one-fifth for total red meat consumption, those in the highest one-fifth had a 58 percent increased risk for diverticulitis. Most of the increase was due to unprocessed red meat — for every additional daily serving of it, the risk for diverticulitis increased by 18 percent.

“There is an idea that there is some pro-inflammatory state mediated by red meat that could contribute to inflammation in certain organs,” said the lead author, Andrew T. Chan, an associate professor of medicine at Harvard. “Diverticulitis is a clear example of inflammation with serious consequences.”