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 Dr. Weil: How to Fit Red Meat into a Healthy Diet

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# How to Fit Red Meat into a Healthy Diet

## Make healthier choices when it comes to beef

By **Andrew Weil**, Dr. Weil is clinical professor of medicine at the University of Arizona and director of its Program in Integrative Medicine.

The best option is to decrease your consumption of red meat, but I'm aware that many people don't want to ban it from their diet. But you can make healthier choices. Here's how to sort out the various labels. Article continues below...

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**Organic**

**Beef** called organic meets strict USDA standards: It must come from cattle that ate only organic feed, spent time outdoors, weren't dosed with hormones, and were raised without **antibiotics**. I believe the overuse of **antibiotics** in cattle is ill-advised because it contributes to the escalating problem of drug-resistant bacteria throughout the world, so look for organic **beef** whenever you can.

**No Hormone Administered**

Producers of **beef** and lamb can use this term--or no synthetic hormones--after satisfying the USDA they haven't used these chemicals. Hormone residues in food may raise the risk of breast or reproductive system cancers among women and prostate cancer in men.

**Grass Fed**

For years, **beef** cattle, which naturally eat grass, have been fattened on corn. But corn-fed cows often become sick and need **antibiotics**. Now, some ranchers are raising grass-fed herds. The meat is higher in healthy omega-3 fatty acids and **vitamin E** and lower in saturated fat and calories. It's also more flavorful, but it can be tougher. Look for **100% grass fed** on the label. The American Grassfed Association lists participating ranchers on **its site**.

**Natural**

This term can mean a variety of things (it must be defined on the label); meat has to be minimally processed, with no artificial ingredients.

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