

Know the Nutrients in Pork



Have You Met the “New” Pork?

If you think you know pork, think again. Seven cuts of pork – from tenderloin to a ribeye pork chop – meet the USDA guidelines for lean. In fact, pork tenderloin is just as lean as a skinless chicken breast, and many cuts of pork from the loin are leaner than a skinless chicken thigh. Surprised? We thought you might be.

Seven common cuts of pork are, on average, 16% leaner than 20 years ago.

The pork industry has responded to the consumer’s desire for lean pork products. Through efforts in feeding and management practices by pork farmers, seven of the most common cuts of pork have, on average, 16% less fat and 27% less saturated fat than 20 years ago.

Looking for Lean? Think “Loin” and “Chop”

One of the easiest ways to remember lean cuts of pork is to look for the word “loin” in the name, such as pork tenderloin. Any kind of pork chop is also a lean choice, from sirloin chop to porterhouse chop.

Pork’s Slim 7

1.02g Saturated Fat 2.98g Total Fat

Pork tenderloin

0.86g Saturated Fat 3.03g Total Fat

Skinless chicken breast

1.15g Saturated Fat 3.71g Total Fat

Sirloin pork chop

1.77g Saturated Fat 5.17g Total Fat

New York pork chop (boneless top loin pork chop)

1.77g Saturated Fat 5.27g Total Fat

Ground pork, 96% lean

1.64g Saturated Fat 5.34g Total Fat

New York pork roast (boneless top loin pork roast)

1.83g Saturated Fat 6.20g Total Fat

Porterhouse chop (bone-in center pork chop)

2.17g Saturated Fat 7.10g Total Fat

Ribeye pork chop (bone-in rib pork chop)

2.58g Saturated Fat 9.25g Total Fat

Skinless chicken thigh

Pork tenderloin is just as lean as a skinless chicken breast!



Legend: Saturated Fat (light blue), Total Fat (dark brown)

Based on 3-ounce cooked servings (roasted or broiled), visible fat and skin trimmed after cooking.

Reference: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service, 2012.

Lean: Less than 10 grams total fat, 4.5 grams saturated fat and 95 milligrams cholesterol per serving.

Extra Lean: Less than 5 grams total fat, 2 grams saturated fat and 95 milligrams cholesterol per serving.

Packed with Protein

High-quality protein provides all of the essential amino acids needed by the body for growth and maintenance. Your body can’t make essential amino acids, so you must get them from the foods you eat. Pork is a high-quality protein food.

Research suggests that evenly distributing protein at meals and snacks throughout the day – about 20 to 30 grams per eating occasion, depending on your individual protein needs – may benefit health.

During stages of life when growth and development needs are high, such as during childhood, adolescence and pregnancy, eating animal foods such as pork will provide both greater quantity and quality of protein than the protein found in plant foods. Getting enough protein is important for adults, too. A growing body of research shows that eating a moderate

amount of protein, combined with physical activity, is key to help lower risk of sarcopenia. Sarcopenia is the gradual loss of muscle mass and function that begins in middle age and can lead to frailty, increased risk of falls and difficulty doing everyday tasks as we get older.

Need another reason to include adequate protein in your diet? Studies have shown that higher protein diets – including those with lean meats such as lean pork cuts – can help with both weight loss and ongoing weight maintenance by reducing overall calorie intake and increasing the amount of calories used. Research has also shown that when people who were obese and overweight switched to a high-protein diet with 25 percent of total calories coming from lean pork and other proteins, they reported an increased feeling of fullness throughout the day.



Pork Provides 9 Key Nutrients

Pork is a nutrient-rich food. A 3-ounce serving of pork is a good source of potassium, riboflavin and zinc, and is an excellent source of vitamin B6, thiamin, phosphorus, niacin and protein. Pork is naturally low in sodium, too.

Pork Nutrient	Benefit
Protein	Macronutrient. Provides essential amino acids. Building block for bone, muscles, skin and blood. Important for growth and development. Key component to help the body repair cells and make new cells. Plays a role in the immune system and in making enzymes, hormones and other body chemicals.
Selenium	Mineral/Trace Element. Helps protect the body cells from damage. Plays a role in regulating thyroid hormone metabolism.
Niacin	B Vitamin. Helps convert food into energy. Essential for healthy skin, blood cells, brain and nervous system. Helps maintain a healthy cardiovascular system.
Phosphorus	Mineral. Helps build and protect strong bones and teeth. Key to maintaining normal pH in the body. Plays a role in shuttling nutrients in and out of body cells.
Thiamin	B Vitamin. Helps convert food into energy. Critical for growth, development and function of body cells. Helps maintain a healthy cardiovascular system.
Vitamin B6	B Vitamin. Needed for enzyme reactions involved in metabolism. Important for brain development during pregnancy and infancy. Plays a role in immune function.
Riboflavin	B Vitamin. Important for the growth, development and function of body cells. Helps convert food into energy. Important in maintaining normal vision and in preventing cataracts.
Zinc	Mineral/Trace Element. Found in all body cells. Critical for proper growth, development and reproduction and helps wounds heal. Needed to make proteins and DNA. Helps immune system fight off bacteria and viruses.
Potassium	Mineral. Balances body fluids and is needed for muscle contractions. Helps send nerve impulses and maintain a steady heartbeat. May help lower blood pressure.

Five-Spice Pork and Apple Salad

10 minutes prep | 20 minutes cook | Serves 4

1 pound pork tenderloin
2 teaspoons Chinese five-spice, divided*
¼ teaspoon salt and black pepper
1 Fuji apple, OR other sweet-tart apple
¼ red onion
3 tablespoons seasoned rice vinegar
2 tablespoons canola oil OR other neutral-flavored oil
12 cups mixed greens, (about 6 ounces)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

Season tenderloin on all sides with 1½ teaspoons Chinese five-spice powder, salt and pepper. Place tenderloin in shallow pan and roast for about 20 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 145 degrees F. Remove pork from oven and let rest 5 minutes. While pork is cooking, core and thinly slice apple. Thinly slice onion.

While pork is resting, in a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil and remaining ½ teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder. Add salad greens, apple and onion and toss. Season with salt and pepper to taste if desired. Arrange salad on plates or a platter.

Cut pork into thin slices. Arrange on top of salads and serve.

*Note: Chinese five-spice powder is a spice blend available in either the spice section or the Asian or ethnic food section of most major supermarkets. Five-spice powder is a mixture of five spices encompassing all five flavors of sweet, sour, bitter, pungent and salty.



Nutrition:

Calories: 220 calories
Protein: 25 grams
Fat: 10 grams
Sodium: 215 milligrams
Cholesterol: 75 milligrams
Saturated Fat: 1.5 grams
Carbohydrates: 9 grams
Fiber: 2 grams

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