

Weighing the pros and cons of pork

By **BARBARA INTERMILL**
Monterey Herald

Valerie T writes: "I am emailing you on the request of my dad who is 88 and has several health issues. He read what you had to say about beef and fish. He wanted to know about pork and the pros and cons of it.

He has diabetes, heart problems, circulatory problems due to the diabetes, kidney problems due to the diabetes, and arthritis. So just being a good daughter and emailing you. Thank you for your time Barbara!"

You certainly are a good daughter, Valerie! And while I cannot give specific medical nutrition advice in this column, I'm happy to answer your dad's inquiry.

Although sometimes called "the other white meat," pork is actually a red meat. That means it contains more myoglobin — a protein that holds oxygen in muscles — than chicken or fish. Other red meats are beef, lamb, veal and venison.

To its credit, pork is a nutrient-dense food. It provides a good dose of high quality protein, iron, zinc and vitamins B6 and B12. Pork's protein helps manage blood sugars, maintains muscle strength and enhances the immune system.

Depending on the severity of your dad's kidney disease, however, he may need to limit the amount of protein he eats. Too much protein is hard on damaged kidneys.

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Dreamstime/TNS

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it was a few decades ago. If your dad enjoys pork, have him look for loin cuts, which are especially lean. Pork tenderloin, for example, can be lower in calories and saturated fat than chicken breast.

In fact, pork tenderloin and sirloin now carry the

American Heart Association's Heart Check stamp that designates a food is not only a good source of beneficial nutrients but is also low in sodium and saturated fats.

Studies have shown that lean pork can be included in an overall healthful diet

and not be a detriment to heart health. A recent study found that adding two to three servings a week of lean pork to a Mediterranean-style diet (olive oil, fish, legumes, nuts and lots of fruits and veggies) improved blood pressure and other signs of heart

health as much as a typical low-fat diet.

The biggest "con" about pork involves some of the foods we hold near and dear: bacon, sausage and hot dogs. These are processed meats which — if eaten regularly — have been implicated in myriad health risks, including cancer. Best if your dad keeps his intake of these foods to a minimum.

If he hasn't already, I'd suggest your dad seek out a registered dietitian nutritionist with special training in diabetes

care. Look for RDN and CDCES credentials. Medicare covers medical nutrition therapy for people like your dad who have diabetes and/or kidney disease. Find a nutrition professional in your area at <https://www.eatright.org/find-a-nutrition-expert>.

■ *Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of "Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating." Email her at barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.*

Linguine with lemon pesto, inspired by dreams of the Amalfi Coast

By **GRETCHEN MCKAY**
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Are you getting itchy for travel? Me too, now that the spring is teasing us with warm and sunny weather that just begs for a road trip.

In particular, I've been dreaming of Italy after seeing a friend's post about his family's trip to the Amalfi Coast. My husband and I were lucky to visit the cliffside village of Positano years ago for an anniversary, and you don't soon forget places with such stunning scenery and amazing food.

There's pasta, of course, but the region also is known for its incredible lemons, which can grow larger than baseballs and are used to make its famed limoncello, along with sorbet, seafood recipes and cake. Its juice also often finds its way into sauces, inspiring me to sate my longing for a trip to Italy with a fresh and fragrant lemony pasta dish I might find on a menu there.

I accentuated the lemon flavor with lemon-infused olive oil, and traded slivered almonds for the more traditional pine nuts. (Pignoli are more expensive.) If you can't find fresh English peas (they come in bags at Trader Joe's), frozen are fine.

Pesto is traditionally made with crushed basil leaves, garlic, pine nuts and Parmesan cheese blended

with olive oil. Here, thin strips of lemon zest are also added to the food processor, along with lemon juice to imbue the sauce with a taste of sunshine. Asparagus adds to the burst of spring flavor.

Pesto is often paired with corkscrew pastas such as fusilli because the grooves grab onto the sauce, but I've found it works well with linguine, too.

LINGUINE WITH LEMON, ASPARAGUS AND PEAS

1 cup fresh English peas
1 pound dried linguine
2 organic lemons, zest removed in long strips and juice reserved (about 1/4 cup)
1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds
2 generous handfuls fresh basil or spinach (about 2 lightly packed cups)
1 clove garlic, smashed
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for passing
Pinch of sugar
1/4 to 1/3 cup good-quality olive oil (I used lemon-infused oil), plus more for pan
Salt and pepper
1/2 pound fresh asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces

Bring 2 quarts of generously salted water to a boil. Add peas, and cook for 60 seconds. Remove to bowl with a slotted spoon or hand-held strainer, and set aside. Bring water back to boil and add linguini, and cook at a boil until al dente, about 8-9 minutes.

Reserve 1 cup of cooking liquid, then drain pasta and add to a large bowl.

While pasta is cooking, make pesto.

Place lemon zest, almonds and basil in bowl of a food processor; process until coarsely grated, about 30 seconds. Add garlic, Parmesan cheese, lemon juice and a pinch of sugar (to balance out the lemon's bitterness) and process until the mixture comes together into a thick paste.

With food processor running, drizzle olive oil into the mixture in a steady stream. Continue processing until the oil is integrated smoothly, stopping occasionally to scrape the sides of the food processor with a spatula. If you prefer a smoother pesto, add more oil and/or lemon juice to taste.

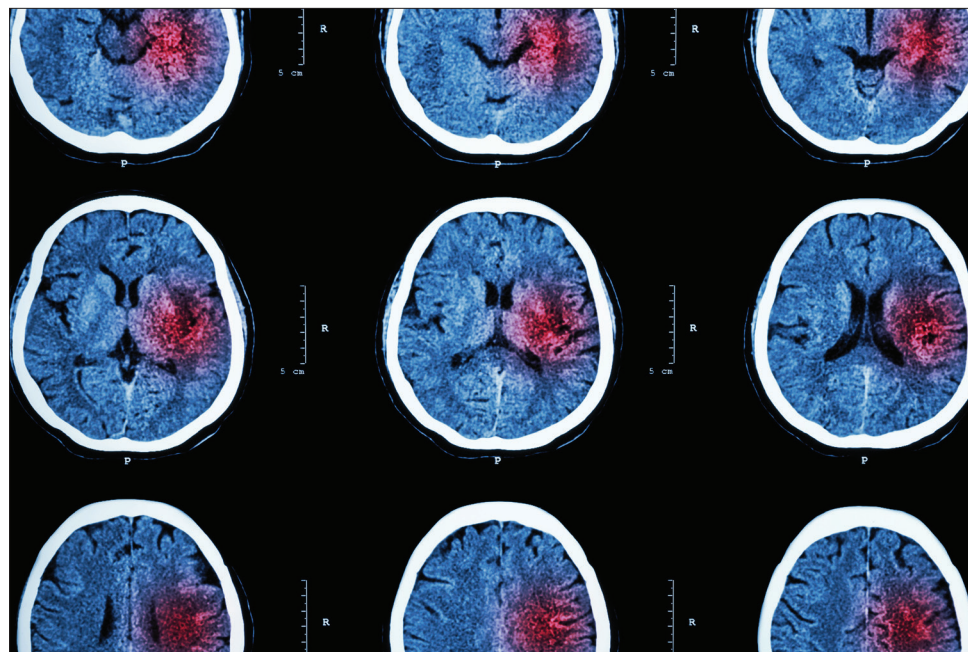
Season to taste with salt and pepper, and set aside until pasta is done.

Heat a generous drizzle or two of oil in a cast-iron or other heavy skillet. Add asparagus and saute until lightly browned and tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Add cooked peas and saute another minute, just until warmed through.

In a large bowl, pour pesto over hot pasta and toss to coat, adding a little reserved pasta water if sauce needs to be thinned. Add asparagus and peas and toss until well combined. (The peas will try to hide in the bottom of the bowl.)

Serve immediately in warmed bowls, with additional Parmesan for passing.

Serves 4-6.



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May is National Stroke Awareness Month.

Learning to spot the warning signs of stroke

By **LAUREL KELLY**
Mayo Clinic News Network

May is National Stroke Awareness Month, which makes this a good time to learn about the warning signs of stroke and the need for prompt treatment.

Stroke is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. and a major cause of serious disability for adults. More than 795,000 people in the U.S. have a stroke each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Stroke risk increases with age, espe-

cially after 55, but strokes can occur at any age.

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is interrupted or reduced, preventing brain tissue from getting oxygen and nutrients. Brain cells begin to die in minutes.

A stroke is a medical emergency, and prompt treatment is crucial. Early action can reduce brain damage and other complications. If you or someone you know is experiencing a stroke, you should call 911 and seek emergency medical care right away.

To recognize the signs of stroke, remember the acronym FAST:

- **Face:** Does the face droop on one side when the person tries to smile?
- **Arms:** Is one arm lower when the person tries to raise both arms?
- **Speech:** Can the person repeat a simple sentence? Is speech slurred or hard to understand?
- **Time:** During a stroke, every minute counts. If you observe any of these signs, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

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