



# TIPS TO HELP YOU AVOID SUPERBUGS IN MEAT

[EWG.ORG/MEATEATERSGUIDE/SUPERBUGS](http://EWG.ORG/MEATEATERSGUIDE/SUPERBUGS)

8.9 BILLION ANIMALS SLAUGHTERED



## WHY AVOID MEAT RAISED WITH ANTIBIOTICS?

Responsible doctors don't give people antibiotics they don't need, but until recently **many livestock producers fed healthy animals antibiotics to make them grow faster** – no prescription needed.

A sick animal may need an antibiotic. But most of the animals raised for food in the U.S. – some 8.9 billion a year – come from factory farms where healthy animals are still given antibiotics in their food and water to **prevent infection in their crowded, stressful and sometimes unsanitary living conditions.**

## THIS HAS DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES. IT:

### BREEDS SUPERBUGS.

Misusing antibiotics on the farm breeds antibiotic-resistant bacteria – superbugs.

### SPREADS SUPERBUGS.

Animals and livestock workers can transmit resistant bacteria to water, soil and air. Superbugs also travel on meat to stores – and kitchens.

### SPREADS RESISTANCE.

Once bacteria develop resistance to one antibiotic, they can often tolerate others as well and spread this trait to nearby bacteria.

### UNDERMINES ANTIBIOTICS.

Superbugs cause infections that are harder to treat and more likely to cause complications – or even death.

## KNOW THE WORST OFFENDERS

In 2015, 83 percent of store-bought meat tested by the government was contaminated with Enterococci bacteria that can indicate fecal contamination. To be safe, it's best to treat all meat as if it's contaminated, mainly by cooking it thoroughly, and by using safe shopping and kitchen practices (see other side).

**High percentages of store-bought meat tested positive for antibiotic-resistant bacteria.**



**TURKEY**  
GROUND TURKEY 79%



**PORK**  
PORK CHOPS 71%



**BEEF**  
GROUND BEEF 62%



**CHICKEN**  
BREASTS, WINGS OR THIGHS 36%

**FOR INFORMATION ON  
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACTS OF MEAT, SEE  
[EWG.ORG/MEATEATERSGUIDE](http://EWG.ORG/MEATEATERSGUIDE)**



## THE GOOD NEWS: YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF

MINIMIZE YOUR EXPOSURES TO SUPERBUGS IN MEAT.

**Opt for organic** meat and meat raised without unnecessary antibiotics when you can. They have fewer antibiotic-resistant bacteria, in part because these livestock producers rely on preventive medicine, good sanitation and stress reduction – not antibiotics – to keep animals healthy. Most stores offer options at reasonable prices.

**Buy from farmers** and producers who use antibiotics prudently: some sell locally and others online.

**Ask your butcher** or local farmer how the meat was raised.

## IN THE STORE

BE LABEL-SAVVY. LABELS CAN BE MISLEADING. Visit [ewg.org/research/labeldecoder](http://ewg.org/research/labeldecoder)

## MOST RELIABLE

American Grassfed, USDA Organic, Animal Welfare Approved, Certified Humane, Food Alliance Certified Grassfed, Global Animal Partnership, Marine Stewardship Council.

## LESS RELIABLE

American Humane Certified, Raised Without Antibiotics, No Antibiotics, No Antibiotics Ever, No Antibiotics Added, No Antibiotics Administered.

## BE WARY

No Antibiotic Residues, Antibiotic Free, No Antibiotic Growth Promotants. No Hormones or Steroids Added, Natural, or Kosher – doesn't tell you anything about antibiotic use.

Bag raw meat before it goes in the grocery cart and keep it away from children. Be especially careful with ground meats. They harbor more bacteria because they have more surfaces where bacteria can lurk.

## IN THE KITCHEN

Store meat on the lowest rack in the fridge, away from fresh produce. Thaw it in the fridge. Use separate cutting boards for meat and produce. Don't wash meat – splashing water spreads bacteria. Use a food thermometer. Learn more about safe practices in EWG's wallet guide [ewg.org/antibioticswalletguide](http://ewg.org/antibioticswalletguide) and at [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov).

## BE VOCAL

**When you're eating out.** Ask if the meat was raised without unnecessary antibiotics.

**At the doctor's office.** Don't press for unnecessary antibiotics. Your doctor is less likely to prescribe one if you don't insist. Parents are the number one reason for antibiotic overuse in children.

**With your friends.** Share this tipsheet or a wallet guide with them.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD.** Go to [ewg.org/AntibioticsAction](http://ewg.org/AntibioticsAction) to find out how you can help preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics.

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Protect your health.