- Oils and fats

Fat's bad for breast cancer

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EATING too much fatty food could worsen breast cancer, Chinese scientists say in research published in the American journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.



The team, led by doctors and scientists from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, warned that obesity "might contribute to accelerating tumour progression or diminish the effectiveness of chemotherapy, ultimately leading to a poorer prognosis."

A high-fat diet is a "high-risk factor for the malignant progression of cancers through the disruption of the intestinal microbiota", according to the researchers.

They said that: "Obesityrelated gut microbiota were associated with poor prognosis and advanced clinicopathological status in female patients with breast cancer."

The findings were derived from what the team described as an "analysis of clinical data, genetic sequencing of gut microbiota and mouse models".

The tests and analysis showed that gut microbiota linked to a high-fat diet caused the body to produce too much of the amino acid leucine, a process which they said promoted "accelerated progression and worsening outcomes for breast cancer and melanoma".

At the same time, however, the tests pointed to a "gut-bone marrow-tumour axis" that could in turn prove "a broad avenue for anti-cancer therapeutic strategies" based on targeting the gut.

Other research has pointed to

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excess weight as a cause of cancer, according to the University of Texas in the United States.

"After choosing not to smoke, keeping a healthy weight is the most important way you can reduce your risk of cancer," the Irish Cancer Society warns on its website. The number of people worldwide classed as obese doubled to almost 900 million between 1990 and 2022, going by country data gathered by the World Health Organization (WHO).

It also estimates that around 2.5 billion of the world's adults are overweight.