

Study: Health gap between vegetarians and meat eaters

By David Newbury, Scotsman

Vegetarians are about a third less likely to suffer from heart disease, diabetes or a stroke than meat eaters, according to new medical research.

Those who shun meat and fish stand a better chance of not developing the high blood pressure and soaring levels of “bad” cholesterol that leads to heart and other problems, it said.

They have a 36 per cent lower rate of metabolic syndrome, the combination of symptoms that are a precursor to diabetes, heart attacks and strokes.

Even people who only give up red meat improve their diets enough to give them a slightly lower risk of developing these conditions, said the United States study.

To be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome, a patient needs to suffer three out of five risk factors – high blood pressure, high HDL cholesterol, high glucose levels, high triglycerides (fat levels in the body) and having too big a waistband.

Vegetarians are not immune to this; 25 per cent of those studied by researchers from Loma Linda University, California had metabolic syndrome.

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