

Original page:

<http://my.webmd.com/content/Article/108/108804.htm>

Aspirin May Cut Prostate Cancer Risk

Study: Long-Term Aspirin, Anti-Inflammatory Drug Use May Help, but It's Too Soon to Be Sure

By [Miranda Hitti](#)
WebMD Medical News

Reviewed By [Michael Smith, MD](#)
on Tuesday, July 05, 2005

July 5, 2005 -- Long-term use of aspirin or anti-inflammatory drugs may modestly lower prostate cancer risk.

It's too early to be sure of that, but it may be good news for men taking these medications for another reason, such as arthritis.

Prostate Cancer Risk Rises With Age

The chance of having prostate cancer rises rapidly after age 50, says the American Cancer Society (ACS). About two-thirds of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men older than 65, says the ACS.

The ACS predicts more than 232,000 new cases of prostate cancer in 2005. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men, except for skin cancers.

Tracking Prostate Cancer

Researchers working on the new study included Eric J. Jacobs, PhD, of the American Cancer Society.

More than 70,000 men took part. Most were 63 years old at the start of the study. Over the course of the study they were asked about their use of aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen and naproxen.

'Modest' Risk Reduction

They had 4,853 prostate cancer cases from 1992-1993 through August 2001.

Those who had taken aspirin regularly for a long time were 15% less likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Other anti-inflammatory drugs were associated with an 18% lower risk of prostate cancer.

That's a "modest" reduction in prostate cancer risk, say the researchers.

In our view, it would be premature to consider reduced risk of prostate cancer a benefit of using aspirin or other anti-inflammatory painkillers, they write. Their study appears in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

The researchers did not examine whether medication dose affected the results.

How Long Is Long-Term Use?

Those men had taken 30 or more aspirin or anti-inflammatory pills monthly for at least five years. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is not an anti-inflammatory drug.

No prostate cancer protection was seen for shorter use.

Few previous studies have probed length of anti-inflammatory drug use, and those actually completed have had mixed results, say the researchers.

Past Studies

Four large studies have examined aspirin use and prostate cancer, say Jacobs and colleagues.

Three of those studies found 20% to 30% reductions in prostate cancer risk in regular users of aspirin, say the researchers.

Several much smaller studies have also looked at the topic, with mixed results, says Jacobs' team.

Possible Side Effects

The ACS does not currently recommend aspirin or other NSAIDs to prevent cancer.

In a news release, ACS officials note potential side effects of the drugs, including stomach bleeding.

SOURCES: Jacobs, E. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, July 6, 2005; vol 97: pp 975-980. American Cancer Society, "What Are the Risk Factors for Prostate Cancer?" American Cancer Society, "What Are the Key Statistics About Prostate Cancer?" News release, American Cancer Society. News release, *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

© 2005 WebMD Inc. All rights reserved.