

Daily aspirin may guard against ovarian cancer

6 February 2014



Study of almost 20,000 women found the drug lowered risk by 20 percent.

(HealthDay)—Taking aspirin every day might lower a woman's risk of developing ovarian cancer by one-fifth, a new study suggests.

Researchers from the U.S. National Cancer Institute analyzed data from 12 studies that involved nearly 8,000 [women](#) with ovarian cancer and close to 12,000 women without the disease to determine how the use of aspirin, other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) affected the risk of ovarian cancer.

About 18 percent of the women used aspirin regularly, 24 percent used non-aspirin NSAIDs (which include drugs such as ibuprofen and naproxen/Aleve) and 16 percent used acetaminophen. Those who used aspirin daily had a 20 percent lower risk of ovarian cancer than those who used aspirin less than once a week, the study found.

The risk of ovarian cancer was 10 percent lower in women who used non-aspirin NSAIDs at least once a week, compared to those who used them less often. However, this difference was not statistically significant, the researchers said.

There was no link between acetaminophen use and ovarian cancer risk, according to the study, which was published Feb. 6 in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

The findings add to the growing list of cancers and other diseases aspirin might help protect against, the researchers said. Although the study showed an association between aspirin use and a lower risk of ovarian cancer, it did not prove a cause-and-effect link.

"Our study suggests that aspirin regimens, proven to protect against heart attack, may reduce the risk of ovarian cancer as well," Britton Trabert, of the National Cancer Institute's division of cancer epidemiology, said in a U.S. National Institutes of Health news release.

"However intriguing our results are, they should not influence current clinical practice," Trabert said. "Additional studies are needed to explore the delicate balance of risk and benefit for this potential chemopreventive agent, as well as studies to identify [how] aspirin may reduce ovarian cancer risk."

Regular aspirin use can cause side effects such as bleeding in the digestive tract or hemorrhagic (bleeding) stroke, the study authors said. They also said people should get their doctor's approval before starting to take [aspirin](#) daily.

More than 20,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed with [ovarian cancer](#) this year, and more than 14,000 will die from the disease.

More information: The American Cancer Society has more about [ovarian cancer](#).

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APA citation: Daily aspirin may guard against ovarian cancer (2014, February 6) retrieved 30 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-daily-aspirin-ovarian-cancer.html>

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