

Aspirin and breast cancer recurrence

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Can it really be that aspirin can reduce the risk of breast cancer spreading to another organ and cut the death rate by half? According to a study out today in the [Journal of Clinical Oncology](#) online, it's true.

The results come from the [Nurse's Health Study](#). This is the ongoing observational study of more than 200,000 nurses who signed on to be followed back in the mid '70s. The study has revealed lots of great info about a number of diseases, among them breast cancer.

Some 4,000 of the nurses in the study were diagnosed with stage 1, 2, or 3 breast cancer between 1976 and 2002. The study looked at their use of aspirin after treatment ended and compared it to frequency of metastatic disease and death from breast cancer. What they found is amazing. Women who took aspirin six or seven days a week had a 43 percent reduced risk of metastasis and a 64 percent lower risk of breast cancer death. **Note here:** If you are in treatment for breast cancer, the study emphasizes that you not take aspirin because of potential interactions that can increase side effects.

While researchers don't know exactly why aspirin has the effect it does, they suspect it reduces inflammation, which is linked to cancer development. The researchers also did not collect data on the dose, but surmised that women who take aspirin regularly are doing so for heart disease prevention. The dose recommended for that is 81 mg a day.

The lead investigator in the study, Michelle Holmes, MD, DrPH, is hoping other trials will confirm the findings, which will mean aspirin will become a low-cost, effective tool against breast cancer. Who would have ever thought it?

By the way, researchers found that women who took non-aspirin, non-steroidal inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) six or seven days a week, also had a reduced risk of breast cancer death around 48 percent, but women who took NSAIDs less frequently and those who used acetaminophen did not experience such benefit.

So, add an aspirin a day to your list.