

[IMAGE]

NSAID Use Increases Lymphoma Risk

We all have lymph nodes - pea-sized glands that are most noticeable in the neck, armpits and groin. Lymph nodes are an important part of the lymphatic system, which is the body's natural defense against infection and disease. When cancer strikes this system, it is known as either Hodgkin's disease (named after the doctor who first described it) or non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL), of which there are approximately 20 different forms.

The cause of NHL is largely unknown, although a recent study suggests use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) might play a role in the onset of the disease. The family of NSAIDs includes several over-the-counter medications most people have used before, including aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), and some use at least one of these several times a week. This study evaluated the association between NSAID use and lymphoma risk in 27,290 postmenopausal women, using questionnaire data and a state cancer registry to calculate risks.

Results: Compared with women who did not use NSAIDs at all, women who used either aspirin exclusively or aspirin and another type of NSAID had a greater risk of developing NHL.

If you reach for the medicine cabinet for a pain-reliever and/or anti-inflammatory medication several times a week, you're among the millions who do so; however, now you know the potential danger involved. Always talk to your doctor before taking any medication -- even the over-the-counter variety.

Reference:

Cerhan JR, Anderson KE, Janney CA, et al. Association of aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug use with incidence of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. *International Journal of Cancer*, June 2003;106(5), pp784-88.

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