Can Daily Aspirin Prevent Cancer?

Aspirin lowers the risk of several cancers, including liver cancer, stomach cancer and lung cancer.

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Taking a single aspirin a day—recommended to help prevent heart disease and colon cancer—may also lower the risk of other cancers, recent research shows.

A study from Taiwan, presented at the 2017 AASLD Liver Meeting, found that people with chronic hepatitis B who used aspirin therapy were nearly 40 percent less likely to develop liver cancer than those who didn't take daily aspirin. About 3 percent of people in the aspirin group developed hepatocellular carcinoma over five years, compared with about 6 percent in the untreated group.

Likewise, a study of more than 600,000 people in Hong Kong showed that long-term aspirin users had a 47 percent lower risk of liver cancer and esophageal cancer, a 38 percent reduction in stomach cancer, a 35 percent drop in lung cancer, 34 percent less pancreatic cancer, 24 percent less colon cancer and a 14 percent drop in prostate cancer.

Commonly prescribed as a pain reliever, aspirin also has anti-inflammatory effects, which may explain how it helps fight cancer.

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