Want to Treat Heartburn Without Raising Cancer Risk? Try These

Zantac and other ranitidine generics may contain NDMA, a probable human carcinogen. Here's what to take instead.

October 28, 2019 By Casey Halter

Last month, news came out that over-the-counter heartburn drug Zantac and other ranitidine-based generics contained a contaminant that could increase the risk for cancer. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulators found N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), a probable human carcinogen, in several batches of OTC ranitidine drugs sold across the United States.

The manufacturer of Zantac and those of some of its generic counterparts then voluntarily recalled their medications from pharmacies and prescribers across the country, leaving thousands of people who suffer from heartburn pondering alternatives. Although not all ranitidine manufacturers have recalled their products, many pharmacies have pulled all supplies of ranitidine-containing meds out of an abundance of caution. The cancer risk posed by the small amounts of NDMA found in these products is not known, but the FDA is currently investigating whether more NDMA may form in the body after consumption.

So what's safe to take instead?

According to a recent FDA update testing has deemed the following heartburn drugs to be free of NDMA:

Pepcid (famotidine)

Nexium (esomeprazole)

Prevacid (lansoprazole)

Prilosec (omeprazole)

Tagamet (cimetidine)

Health officials say patients taking prescription or OTC ranitidine who wish to stop should talk to their provider about other treatment options before switching over. Those who have already

switched to one of the aforementioned drugs should rest assured that they are NDMA-free.

Since the recall, the FDA has set standards and shared with drugmakers methods for testing for NDMA in drugs. The agency also announced this week that it was going to institute a new test for the carcinogen that uses more widely available technology, making it easier for providers and distributors to keep their supplies safe.

More information about which heartburn products are safe and which are not can be found on a web page set up by the agency. Officials are also still working to determine the exact cause of NDMA impurities in ranitidine and promises to communicate more information as it is available.

To learn more about recent Zantac and ranitidine recalls, click here.

To check out the FDA's Q+A page on the topic, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/want-treat-heartburn-without-raising-cancer-risk-try