

# Aspirin vs. Omega 3's for Blood Thinning

More and more people in the public are getting the message about the health benefits of omega 3's. However, it's interesting that people are still being told to take aspirin/baby aspirin for a protective blood thinning effect or to ward off a heart attack.

Omega 3's naturally thin the blood. In fact, the only contraindication to supplementing with omega 3's would be allergies to fish or if taking Coumadin/ blood thinner.

A study published by the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* (June 1, 2005) suggests that long-term **ibuprofen** or **aspirin** use might actually RAISE the risk of **breast cancer**.

They study analyzed data on 114,460 women in the ongoing California Teacher's Study. The women were 22-85 years old and free of breast cancer when they enrolled in the study a decade ago.

What they found was this:

**\*\*Women who took **ibuprofen** daily for at least 5 years were about 50% more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer than those who did not take the drug regularly.**

**\*\*Women who took **aspirin** daily for at least 5 years were 80% more likely to develop breast cancers (that were not sensitive to hormones estrogen or progesterone) than women who were not regular users of aspirin.**

That's a pretty comprehensive study that was published in a reputable journal. So my concern would be if I was prescribed aspirin for blood-thinning that I would be substantially increasing my risk of something equally as bad.

In fact, a study published in European Heart Journal (May 26, 2006) concluded that using **any NSAIDs** was associated with a modest risk of a first-time heart attack (myocardial infarction.) The records of 33,309 patients were evaluated in Finland over 2 years and the combined **risk of a first heart attack was 40% higher with the use of any kind of NSAIDs.**

Additionally, another study in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute (1/7/04) linked **aspirin** usage in women to increased risk of **pancreatic cancer**. When compared to consistent non-users of aspirin, the **pancreatic cancer risk** increased with dose:  
**1-3 tablets/week** led to 11% increased risk

**7-13 tablets/week** led to **41% increased risk** (are you in this group who takes one aspirin a day for "heart health"?)  
**>14 tablets/week** led to **86% increased risk**.

*Also, women who reported more than 20 years of regular aspirin use had an **increased risk of 58%**.* 88,378 women were followed for 18 years and 161 cases of pancreatic cancer were documented.

Even in the journal Circulation (4/23/2002), a study was done on patients who had a heart attack (myocardial infarction) within 3 months of the study. In a randomized trial of patients who received Omega 3's (the study didn't specify EPA, DHA or ALA), there was a **41% reduced risk of mortality (death) after 3 months of treatment compared to the group who didn't receive omega 3's**. They used 1g/day and the authors felt the study supports an antiarrhythmic\*\* effect of Omega 3's. 15 references were cited in this study as supporting a *decreased risk of coronary heart disease by consuming omega 3's from the diet or supplements.*

**\*\*Anti-arrhythmic** refers to protecting the heart's rhythm from getting "out of sync". Abnormal rhythm is called arrhythmia/anti means against; arrhythmia happens during **fibrillation**. On TV shows, you see heart patients get revived with a **de-fibrillator**—removing the fibrillation by re-setting the heart rate. AED's found in public places and airplanes are **de-fibrillators**

A study in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine (October 2006) found that taking Omega 3's would be **800% more effective at preventing death due to arrhythmia** (cardiac arrest) than if an AED machine were on-hand in every house and public place in the United States to instantly rev-vive a patient in cardiac arrest.

According to the authors, the biggest reduction in deaths would be for *apparently healthy individuals* to take the omega 3's to reduce the burden of sudden death.

It seems if Aspirin were going up against Omega 3's in a heart protection fight, omega 3's would dominate! (With aspirin's linkage to a *40% increased risk of heart attack, 86% increased risk of pancreatic cancer & 80% increased risk for breast cancer!*) I'd say omega 3's clearly win by a knock out :-)

**So bottoms up little fishys!**  
***Yours in Health, Dr. Erica***