

## Aspirin May Protect Against Colon Cancer

Taking daily doses of aspirin has been touted as helpful in preventing heart attacks and strokes. A new study, led by researchers at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., found that low daily doses of aspirin also may offer protection against colon cancer.

In the study, low daily doses of aspirin helped prevent precancerous growths called adenomas found in the large bowel. When a group of 1,121 patients with a history of adenomas were given either aspirin or a placebo, the group that took 81 mgs of aspirin a day had 19 percent fewer adenoma growths.

For patients with advanced colon lesions, the results were even better. Those who took low daily doses of aspirin reduced their cancer risk by 40 percent. Taking higher doses of aspirin did not provide any greater protection, according to researchers.

"The study suggests that aspirin reduces the risk of colorectal adenomas and, by implication, the risk of colorectal cancer," said Robert Haile, Dr.P.H., a professor of preventive medicine at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and one of the study's authors.

If you would like to start a daily aspirin regimen, talk to your health care provider to see whether this treatment is right for you.

Source: University of Southern California, [www.usc.edu](http://www.usc.edu)

## New Treatments Offer Relief From Rheumatoid Arthritis

Arthritis, a disease that causes joints to swell or deteriorate, comes in more than 100 forms. One of the most common is rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease that affects nearly 2 million Americans.

In rheumatoid arthritis, the body's immune system attacks the lining of joints, causing them to become stiff, swollen and painful. Symptoms—which can include joint pain and swelling, loss of appetite, and a low-grade fever—can appear in anyone at any age, although the disease is most likely to begin between 30 and 60 and is twice as common in women as in men.

There is no cure for the debilitating disease, which affects patients for the rest of their lives and often worsens year by year. But some exciting new treatments offer temporary relief, including a new group of drugs called tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blockers.

"TNF is an inflammatory molecule that's produced inside the joint in rheumatoid arthritis," explained David Fox, M.D., division chief of Rheumatology at the University of Michigan Health System in Ann Arbor. "With the new medications available, we're able to neutralize that molecule and reduce the swelling."

Three new TNF blocker drugs were recently approved for use in the United States. If you suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, ask your health care provider about these new options.

Source: University of Michigan Health System, [www.med.umich.edu](http://www.med.umich.edu)

## A Pain in the Nose?

Have you been feeling run down and achy for a while for no apparent reason? You may want to ask your doctor to check your sinuses.

A recent study at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, D.C., found that patients with unexplained chronic fatigue were nine times more likely to also suffer from sinus trouble. And those with chronic unexplained pain were six times more likely to have sinus problems.

Alexander Chester, M.D., a clinical professor of medicine at Georgetown, questioned 297 of his patients about their health and discovered the connection. His findings corresponded with an earlier study that said people treated for sinusitis—inflammation of the sinus cavities—reported that when their sinus problems cleared up, their unexplained pain and fatigue did, too.

"Chronic fatigue is a condition that frustrates both doctors and their patients since treatments directed at just the symptoms without knowing the cause are typically ineffective," Dr. Chester said. "While sinusitis

will not be the diagnosis for everyone who comes to an internist with unexplained fatigue or pain, this study does suggest that it should be considered as part of a patient's medical evaluation."

Sinusitis affects 32 million Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The rates are highest among women and people living in the South.

Source: Georgetown Medical Center, [www.georgetown.edu](http://www.georgetown.edu)

