

Finnish firm to market cancer-prevention capsule

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Finnish medical biotechnology group Biohit said Monday it had developed a capsule that could help prevent stomach and throat cancer by neutralising the cancer-causing compound acetaldehyde.

Acetaldehyde is produced from [alcohol](#) and sugar by microbes in the mouth. The gastric acid of a healthy stomach generally kills these [microbes](#), but they can survive in an acid-free stomach and continue to produce acetaldehyde there.

"It is clear that acetaldehyde is a class one carcinogenic, or a cancer-causing factor of the worst kind, and it is clear that an acid-free stomach is a risk factor for stomach [cancer](#)," Biohit chief executive Osmo Suovaniemi told AFP.

He said the capsule, developed by Biohit in collaboration with researchers from the University of Helsinki, neutralised acetaldehyde when taken with meals or alcohol and could, therefore, help prevent the development of cancer.

"How many cancer cases it may prevent in future remains to be seen," Suovaniemi said, adding it would take years to determine the capsule's cancer-preventing impact.

Suovaniemi said the drug had received the approval of medical authorities after undergoing clinical testing.

Biohit aims to make the over-the-counter capsules available in Finnish pharmacies during the first half of this year and to start marketing them internationally during 2011 at the latest.

Biohit shares surged on the news and were up by 120 percent at 3.36 euros in late afternoon trading on the Helsinki stock exchange.

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