

Long-term statin use is unlikely to increase cancer risk: study

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Researchers have further established that long-term use of statins is unlikely to substantially increase or decrease overall cancer risk, according to study results presented at the Ninth Annual AACR Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research Conference, held Nov. 7-10, 2010, in Philadelphia.

Statins are a class of drugs commonly used in the United States to lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. While study results to date have shown that short-term use of statins has little effect on risk of developing cancer, not much is known about long-term statin use and incidence of many cancers.

Eric J. Jacobs, Ph.D., strategic director of pharmacoepidemiology at the American Cancer Society, and colleagues examined the association between use of cholesterol-lowering drugs, predominantly statins, and the incidence of the 10 most common cancers, as well as overall cancer incidence.

The study included 133,255 participants in the Cancer Prevention Study II Nutrition Cohort.

Participants completed several questionnaires that included information about a range of lifestyle and medical factors, including use of cholesterol-lowering drugs, and were followed over a period of about 10 years, according to Jacobs. During this time frame, more than 15,000 participants were diagnosed with cancer.

Using cholesterol-lowering drugs for five years or longer was not associated with overall cancer incidence, or incidence of bladder, breast, colorectal, lung, pancreatic, prostate, or renal cell cancer, but was associated with lower risk of [melanoma](#), endometrial cancer and non-Hodgkin [lymphoma](#).

"The lower risk of endometrial cancer and melanoma among long-term users has not been seen in most previous studies and was surprising," Jacobs said. "The lower risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma among [statin](#) users has been seen in some, but not all, previous studies."

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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