

# Frequent aspirin use shows promise for preventing ovarian cancer in individuals at higher risk

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Frequent aspirin use is linked with lower ovarian cancer risk in individuals with multiple risk factors, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

"Ovarian cancer is the most fatal gynecologic cancer. Most known risk factors of ovarian cancer—such as family history, mutations in the BRCA 1 and 2 genes, and endometriosis—can't be modified," says Britton Trabert, Ph.D., MS, investigator in the Cancer Control and Population Sciences Program at Huntsman Cancer Institute and assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Utah School of Medicine. This new research holds promise because it shows an actionable step people at higher risk of ovarian cancer can take to reduce their chance of developing the disease.

"Daily, or almost daily, aspirin use was associated with a 13% reduction in ovarian cancer risk and we found that aspirin benefited most subgroups. Importantly, this research provides further evidence that ovarian cancer [chemoprevention](#) with frequent aspirin use could benefit people in higher-risk subgroups."

A 2018 study showed daily aspirin use is linked with reduced ovarian cancer rates. However, individual studies have not been able to look at whether aspirin would be beneficial to people at varying risk of disease.

Subgroups were defined by individual factors like [endometriosis](#), obesity, a [family history](#) of breast or ovarian cancer, pregnancy, oral contraceptive use, tubal ligation, and by number of risk factors: none, one, and two or more.

"We pooled data from 17 studies, nine prospective cohort studies from the Ovarian Cancer Cohort Consortium, and eight case-control studies from the Ovarian Cancer Association Consortium that included more than 8,300 cases. This gave us a more detailed and accurate look than if we used published data."

"Aspirin use has been linked with major adverse events, including internal bleeding and stroke. We wanted to evaluate whether aspirin

could prevent ovarian cancer in people at higher risk. Since aspirin helped people who had two or more risk factors, we hope patients and clinicians can use this research to have an informed conversation when it comes to potential [preventive measures](#). Individuals should consult their health care providers before beginning new medication in order to most appropriately balance any potential risks with the potential benefits."

Trabert's research focuses on identifying strategies for prevention or early detection of ovarian and endometrial cancers. Trabert earned a Department of Defense Investigator-Initiated Research Award related to her work with [aspirin](#) use and lower [ovarian cancer](#) rates.

**More information:** Lauren M. Hurwitz et al, Modification of the Association Between Frequent Aspirin Use and Ovarian Cancer Risk: A Meta-Analysis Using Individual-Level Data From Two Ovarian Cancer Consortia, *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1200/JCO.21.01900](#)

Provided by University of Utah Health Sciences

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