

Lifewire: Aspirin can eliminate another headache - asthma

by Ven Griva

Aspirin, or acetylsalicylic acid, has long been used to relieve minor pain, reduce fevers and decrease swelling.

Derived from the inner bark of the willow tree, its first recorded mention comes from the Greek physician Hippocrates in the fifth century B.C. Aspirin was first patented by Frederick Bayer Co. in Germany in 1896 and sold in powder form as a pain reliever.

Today, aspirin is known to have blood-thinning qualities and, when consumed daily in low doses, is touted for its ability to prevent heart attacks. Recently, another use for aspirin might have come to light.

In a study of 22,071 healthy male physicians taking a low dose of aspirin every other day, aspirin was shown to lower the risk of receiving an initial asthma diagnosis by 22 percent.

These findings, based on data from the double-blind Physicians' Health Study, appear in the second January issue of the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

Dr. Tobias Kurth of the Division of Aging at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Massachusetts and five associates studied physicians, ages 40 to 84, over a period of nearly five years. Among the 11,037 doctors who took aspirin, 113 new cases of asthma were diagnosed, as contrasted to 145 in the placebo group.

"Aspirin reduced the risk by 22 percent of newly diagnosed adult-onset asthma," said Kurth. "These results suggest that aspirin may reduce the development of asthma in adults. They do not imply that aspirin improves symptoms in patients with asthma."

According to the authors, the 22 percent lower risk of newly diagnosed asthma among those assigned to the low-dose aspirin group was not affected by participant characteristics like smoking, body mass index or age.

EAT YOUR VEGGIES

A new University of Illinois study shows that tomatoes and broccoli - two vegetables known for their

cancer-fighting qualities - are better at shrinking prostate tumors when both are part of the daily diet than when eaten alone.

"When tomatoes and broccoli are eaten together, we see an additive effect. We think it's because different bioactive compounds in each food work on different anti-cancer pathways," said University of Illinois food science and human nutrition professor John Erdman.

In a study published Jan. 15 in *Cancer Research*, Erdman and researcher Kirstie Canene-Adams fed a diet containing 10 percent tomato powder and 10 percent broccoli powder to laboratory rats that had been implanted with prostate cancer cells.

Other rats in the study received either tomato or broccoli powder alone; or a supplemental dose of lycopene, the red pigment in tomatoes thought to be the effective cancer-preventive agent in tomatoes; or finasteride, a drug prescribed for men with enlarged prostates. Another group of rats was castrated.

After 22 weeks, the tumors were weighed. The tomato-broccoli combination outperformed all other diets in shrinking prostate tumors. Biopsies of tumors were evaluated at The Ohio State University, confirming that tumor cells in the tomato-broccoli-fed rats were not proliferating as rapidly.

The only treatment that approached the tomato-broccoli diet's level of effectiveness was castration, said Erdman.

"As nutritionists, it was very exciting to compare this drastic surgery to diet and see that tumor reduction was similar," said Canene-Adams. "Older men with slow-growing prostate cancer who have chosen watchful waiting over chemotherapy and radiation should seriously consider altering their diets to include more tomatoes and broccoli."

HUMAN USE

From the data gathered from the study, scientists were able to determine how much broccoli and tomatoes a 55-year-old man should eat daily to receive the same cancer-fighting effects.

"To get these effects, men should consume daily 1.4 cups of raw broccoli and 2.5 cups of fresh tomato, or 1 cup of tomato sauce, or one-half cup of tomato paste," Canene-Adams said. "I think it's very doable for a man to eat a cup and a half of broccoli per day or put broccoli on a pizza with one-half cup of tomato paste."

Erdman said the study showed that eating whole foods is better than consuming their components.

"It's better to eat tomatoes than to take a lycopene supplement," he said. "And cooked tomatoes may be better than raw tomatoes. Chopping and heating make the cancer-fighting constituents of tomatoes and broccoli more bio-available."

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