

Errant Study Says Multivitamins Cause Breast Cancer March, 2010.

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Larsson SC, Akesson A, Bergkvist L, et al. Multivitamin use and breast cancer incidence in a prospective cohort of Swedish women. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. March 24, 2010; ajcn.2009.28837.

Comment: This nine-year Swedish study of 35,329 said that 3.25 percent of the women who took multivitamins developed breast cancer, while 2.6 percent of women in the study who did not take multivitamins developed breast cancer. This small 0.6 percent difference was trumpeted loudly in the press, raising a question as to whether the medical/pharmaceutical complex promoted media coverage of this aspect of the study in their continuing campaign to make safe multivitamins seem dangerous. That 0.6 percent means much is a stretch. But let's take a critical look at this anyway and see what lessons we can learn.

Note that many studies have shown that multivitamin intake is associated with a reduction in the risk of various cancers, and the reductions are much greater than 0.6 percent. A study by [Matta](#), presented at the American Association for Cancer Research 101st Annual Meeting 2010 showed a 33 percent reduction in breast cancer risk for those taking multivitamins (and a 41% decrease associated with taking higher doses of calcium.)

Some studies have shown as much as 70 percent reduction in risk. Multivitamins with higher potencies of calcium, vitamin D, folic acid, vitamin E, zinc and selenium will likely reduce risk more, as each of these nutrients have been shown to reduce breast cancer risk by themselves.

So why does this single contrary study with such a small effect merit so much publicity?

No Information About Multivitamin Ingredients

A question that was not answered in this study: If the majority of women in this study took mass-market vitamins, like [Centrum](#)-type vitamins, they were also taking small amounts of non-nutritive chemical carcinogen additives, like sodium aluminosilicate. Indeed, the study did not ask which multivitamins the subjects took. Mass-market types of multivitamins typically also contain titanium dioxide, a confirmed Class 2B carcinogen and sodium lauryl sulfate, another suspected carcinogen with mutagenic properties. Since the large population of women in the study took unknown brands of multivitamins, one must wonder how many of the multivitamins taken contained small amounts of these chemical carcinogenic additives.

Your Choice: Pure Vitamins Or Vitamins With Carcinogenic Additives

In the marketplace, there are two types of multivitamin formulas available - pure vitamins with no additives, which have only been shown to be beneficial to health in thousands of studies and multivitamins with non-nutritive chemical carcinogens additives that can include artificial coloring agents, fillers and binders. The authors of this study should have asked which type of vitamins the subjects took. If they had, we might find that this was the reason why the women in the study who took multivitamins developed 0.6 percent more breast cancer.

However, it wasn't because of the vitamins. Vitamins are essential for life and health with thousands of studies showing health benefits, including reduced risks of various cancers. No. The small increase in cancer risk was caused by the carcinogenic chemical additives.

Conclusion: An increase in the rate of breast cancer could likely be caused by the "other ingredients" that are known carcinogens. When you purchase multivitamins, only buy multivitamins that contain pure vitamins and minerals with no chemical additives. Additives to avoid include sodium aluminosilicate, titanium dioxide, sodium lauryl sulfate, red #5, FD&C Blue 1, FD&C Red 40, FD&C Yellow 6, sodium benzoate, sucrose, titanium dioxide, glucose, lactose monohydrate. High quality vitamins do not contain these chemical additives.