

## OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH...

### Can Aspirin Prevent Cancer?

Article date: August 11, 2016

Healthy Living Newsletter

By Stacy Simon

You may have seen studies in the news suggesting that aspirin may be helpful in preventing cancer. But you should not use aspirin on a regular basis without first checking with your health care provider.

This is because frequent aspirin use can cause serious health problems such as internal bleeding, which is why no public health organization, including the American Cancer Society, currently recommends taking aspirin solely to reduce cancer risk.

The clearest link to date is between aspirin and one cancer type: [colorectal cancer](#). Scientific evidence shows that long-term daily aspirin use will lower the risk of developing colorectal cancer. However, it can take several years from the time when aspirin use is started until the risk of developing colorectal cancer is reduced. And, it remains unclear whether the potential for reducing your cancer risk is worth the risks associated with taking aspirin frequently. The research for other types of cancers is even less clear.

#### Bottom line

People who are wondering if they should take aspirin should talk to their own health care provider, who knows their individual medical history and is aware of other medications they may be taking, and can take this into account when weighing the risks and benefits of aspirin use.

- Do not take start taking an aspirin without talking with your doctor.
- If your doctor has prescribed aspirin for you, take it exactly as prescribed.
- Keep in mind that “baby” aspirin is not the same as “regular” aspirin.

If you take daily aspirin, see your doctor regularly so you can be watched closely for bleeding.

### Ask Your Doctor Questions About Breast Cancer

Being told you have breast cancer can be scary and stressful. You probably have a lot of questions and concerns.

Learning about the disease, how it's treated, and how this information might apply to you is a lot to do on your own. You might need some help. Your American Cancer Society can give you general information about this disease and its treatment, but your cancer care team is the best source of information about your situation. It's important for you to be able to talk frankly and openly with your cancer care team. They want to answer all of your questions, no matter how minor they might seem to you. But it helps if you know what to ask. Here are some questions that you can use to help you better understand breast cancer and your options. Don't be afraid to take notes and tell the doctors or nurses when you don't understand what they're saying. The questions are grouped by where you are in the process of cancer treatment. Not all of these questions will apply to you, but they should help get you started.

*For more information on breast cancer please contact your American Cancer Society toll free at 1-800-227-2345 or online at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).*

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#### Questions You May Not Think to Ask:

1. Exactly what type of breast cancer do I have?
2. How do I get a copy of my pathology report?
3. Has the cancer spread to my lymph nodes or other organs?
4. What's the cancer's stage? What does that mean?
5. How does this affect my treatment options and long-term outcome (prognosis)?
6. What are my chances of survival, based on my cancer as you see it?
7. How much experience do you have treating this type of cancer?
8. Will I need other tests before we can decide on treatment?
9. What are my treatment choices?
10. What treatment do you recommend and why?
11. What's the goal of my treatment?
12. Should I think about genetic testing?
13. Should I get a second opinion? How do I do that?
14. Should I think about taking part in a clinical trial?

## RESEARCH SUPPORTING LAUGHTER THERAPY

A growing body of research supports the theory that laughter may have therapeutic value.

For years, the use of humor has been used in medicine. Surgeons used humor to distract patients from pain as early as the 13th century. Later, in the 20th century, came the scientific study of the effect of humor on physical wellness. Many credit this to Norman Cousins. After years of prolonged pain from a serious illness, Cousins claims to have cured himself with a self-invented regimen of laughter and vitamins. In his 1979 book *Anatomy of an Illness*, Cousins describes how watching comedic movies helped him recover.

Over the years, researchers have conducted studies to explore the impact of laughter on health. After evaluating participants before and after a humorous event (i.e., a comedy video), studies have revealed that episodes of laughter helped to reduce pain, decrease stress-related hormones and boost the immune system in participants.

Today more than ever before, people are turning to humor for therapy and healing. Medical journals have acknowledged that laughter therapy can help improve quality of life for patients with chronic illnesses. Many hospitals now offer laughter therapy programs as a complementary treatment to illness.

## THE HEALING POWER OF LAUGHTER

For people living with cancer, it may seem strange to find humor when facing such serious issues. Yet, laughter can be helpful in ways you might not have realized or imagined.

Laughter can help you feel better about yourself and the world around you. Laughter can be a natural diversion. When you laugh, no other thought comes to mind. Laughing can also induce physical changes in the body. After laughing for only a few minutes, you may feel better for hours.

When used in addition to conventional cancer treatments, laughter therapy may help in the overall healing process.

According to some studies, laughter therapy may provide physical benefits, such as helping to:

- Boost the immune system and circulatory system
- Enhance oxygen intake
- Stimulate the heart and lungs
- Relax muscles throughout the body
- Trigger the release of endorphins (the body's natural painkillers)
- Ease digestion/soothes stomach aches
- Relieve pain
- Balance blood pressure
- Improve mental functions (i.e., alertness, memory, creativity)

Laughter therapy may also help to:

- Improve overall attitude
- Reduce stress/tension
- Promote relaxation
- Improve sleep
- Enhance quality of life
- Strengthen social bonds and relationships

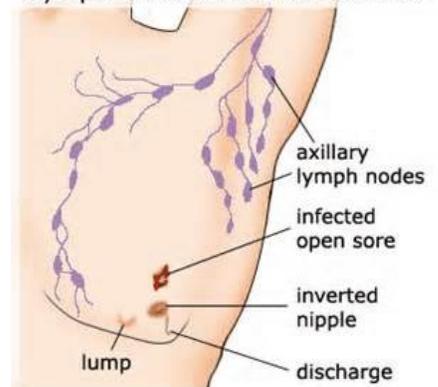
Produce a general sense of well-being Cancer Treatment Centers of America

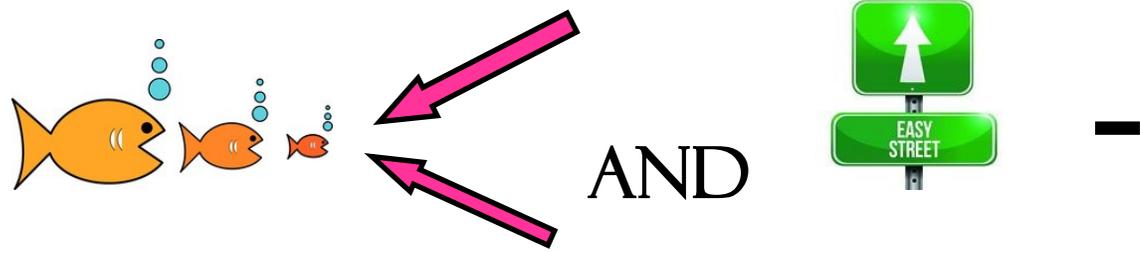
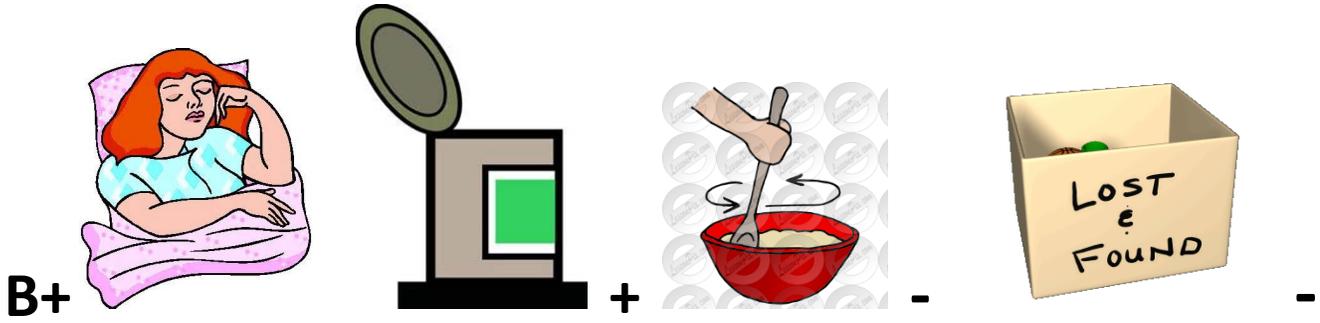


Did you hear the one about the chicken.....

## Breast cancer is NOT just for girls

### Symptoms of Male Breast Cancer





**Solve the Resbus! One entry per person, please.**  
**Submit by Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:00PM**  
**[cbsummers@utica.edu](mailto:cbsummers@utica.edu)**

*and there is always hope...*



**Upcoming:**  
**Yoga Nidra with Andrea O'Brien OTR/L**  
 10/24, 10/31, 11/7, 11/14, 11/21, 11/28 [Register here](#)

**Lunch & Learn with Hospice**  
 Thursday 10/27 1-2pm [Register here](#)