



April 13th, 2015

April is Cancer Awareness Month: Understanding Risks

NSAIDs May Reduce Certain Cancer Risks

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) have demonstrated protective benefits for some types of cancer, specifically colon, lung, breast and prostate cancers. Now there's evidence that they can reduce the risk for a type of skin cancer, squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). NSAID use lowered the rate of SCC by 15-18% - not enough to recommend taking them regularly, but enough to consider this a beneficial side effect.

Cholesterol and Breast Cancer Risk

Preliminary research has found a link between high cholesterol levels and breast cancer. More study is needed to confirm this information and clarify a potential causative relationship, but the retrospective analysis of over 650,000 UK women revealed that having high cholesterol increased the risk of cancer by 1.64 times. The findings aren't surprising, though, given the established link between obesity and diabetes with breast cancer.

Risk Associated with Morcellation

Morcellation is a surgical technique that has come under scrutiny. In this procedure, used during laparoscopic operations for hysterectomies, the uterus is "minced up" by a power device to allow for easier extraction. The benefits are reduced invasiveness and quicker recoveries, however there have been cases where incomplete extraction has resulted in the spread of endometriosis or cancer. Consider carefully before undergoing this procedure.

Risk of False Positives

There is no doubt that cancer screening has played a role in the early detection and treatment of many cancers, improving survival. Lately, though, the pendulum has begun to swing the other way. There is reference to the increasing rate of false positive results leading to unnecessary procedures and stress. The call has been made to use screening more judiciously - only subjecting those with specific risks, rather than entire populations.

April is Cancer Awareness Month. Be vigilant for specific changes in your own body and bring them to the attention of your physician. Many people are the first to detect their own cancers! Visit www.cancer.ca for more info.