



National Prescribing Service Limited

MEDIA RELEASE

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Be MedicineWise – talk to your doctor or pharmacist about NSAIDs

A study from Denmark into the safety of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) has received significant media attention but the National Prescribing Service is concerned some media reports may exaggerate the risk of using these products.

The research, published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, is broadly consistent with existing information about these products and their cardiovascular effects.

“This is an interesting and complex study that deserves careful interpretation,” NPS CEO, Dr Lynn Weekes said.

“Importantly, it highlights that all medicines – including those with a long history of routine use – have the potential to cause harms as well as to provide benefits.”

The potential harms of NSAIDs include stomach ulcers and an increased risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. At the same time, NSAIDs provide significant pain relief and anti-inflammatory effects for many people.

“It’s vital people realise that just because they can purchase something in a supermarket or petrol station doesn’t mean the product is without serious potential side effects,” Dr Weekes said.

“Similarly, people should understand this study focuses on *increased risk*, which is not to say that by taking these products you will experience an adverse event.”

“All medicines come with potential side effects and react differently in individuals, depending on what other medicines they may be taking. For this reason it’s important to tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking these medicines, even if you have been taking them for some time and feel fine.”

If you are taking an NSAID regularly for pain, talk to your doctor about the lowest effective dose and discuss any concerns you may have about side effects.

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Media enquiries to Katie Butt, NPS Media Adviser, 02 8217 8667 or kbutt@nps.org.au

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