Osteoporosis Drug Effective in Breast Cancer

Zoledronic acid (Zometa®) improves outcomes when added to standard therapy for estrogen-responsive breast cancer in premenopausal women. Zoledronic acid belongs to the bisphosphonate class of medications, which fight bone loss and osteoporosis.

The study enrolled 1,803 premenopausal women after surgery for early-stage breast cancer that tested positive for estrogen receptors. The women were randomly assigned to one of two different endocrine (hormone-suppressive) regimens, with or without zoledronic acid, for three years.

Disease-free survival was analyzed at a median of 48 months later. At that time, 137 deaths, relapses, or new tumors had occurred. Disease-free survival was similar for the two endocrine regimens when given alone. However, individuals using both zoledronic acid and endocrine therapy had a 36% lower risk of disease progression, compared with individuals using endocrine therapy alone.

These data confirm research indicating that bisphosphonates have cancer-fighting properties and further support Life Extension's recommendation that certain cancer patients use bisphosphonates. For more than 10 years, Life Extension has reported that bisphosphonates may help prevent certain sequelae of breast and prostate cancer, such as bone metastasis.

Any patient taking a bisphosphonate drug should also take at least 1,000 mg of highly absorbable calcium, along with vitamins D and K.

—Laura J. Ninger, ELS

Gamma Tocopherol May Prevent Prostate Cancer

The gamma-tocopherol form of vitamin E may prevent prostate cancer, according to a newly published study.

Japanese researchers conducted a series of experiments using mice specially bred to develop human-type prostate carcinoma. In one experiment, young male rats received either the alpha-tocopherol form of vitamin E in the diet, or gamma tocopherol, for 10 weeks. In a second experiment, young male rats received one of three different concentrations of gamma tocopherol in the diet for seven weeks.

In both experiments, gamma tocopherol significantly suppressed the progression of prostatic lesions from a microscopic, precancerous state to full-blown prostate cancer. Furthermore, the suppression effect increased with escalating doses of gamma tocopherol.

The study, "clearly demonstrated that gamma tocopherol suppresses prostate tumor progression in [a live animal model], and could be a candidate chemopreventive agent for human prostate cancer," the investigators noted.

—Dale Kiefer

Tea Drinkers May Have Lower Stroke Risk

Daily consumption of green or black tea is associated with a reduced risk of stroke, according to a review of the medical literature.

Investigators searched for studies that examined the association between green or black tea drinking and fatal or non-fatal stroke. Nine studies from six countries were identified that included 4,378 strokes among nearly 200,000 persons.

Pooled data revealed that drinking three or more cups of tea per day was associated with a 21% lower risk of stroke when compared with the consumption of less than one cup per day. The results were independent of type of tea, country of origin, and Asian versus non-Asian race.

Proposed mechanisms for a reduction in stroke include beneficial effects of tea polyphenols (catechins) and the amino acid theanine on cardiovascular health.

—Laura J. Ninger, ELS


* Stroke. 2009 Feb 19.
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