



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Acid-Reducing Drugs Decrease Ulcer Risk

(NAPSA)—According to a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, medications known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are responsible for gastrointestinal complications that have led to more than 100,000 hospitalizations and 16,500 deaths in the United States. NSAIDs include prescription and over-the-counter aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen—medications that millions of Americans take every day to control varying types and degrees of pain.

People may be at increased risk for stomach ulcers if they take NSAIDs on a daily basis. In fact, as many as 20 percent of those who take NSAID pain relievers daily may develop stomach ulcers.

### Talk to your doctor

If your doctor thinks you may be at increased risk for developing a stomach ulcer, he or she may recommend a proton pump inhibitor (PPI)—a type of medication that can be taken along with your pain medication. PPIs, when taken along with NSAIDs, can reduce the risk of developing a stomach ulcer by limiting the amount of acid the stomach produces. Alternatively, a medication

Factors that may place people at increased risk of a stomach ulcer include;

- Continuous NSAID use
- Increasing age
- A history of ulcer or GI complications
- Alcohol use



**Everyday pain medication may lead to an increased risk for stomach ulcers.**

known as misoprostol can be taken to reduce the risk of stomach ulcers from NSAIDs by helping to protect the stomach lining.

“Traditional NSAID therapy is a crucial first-line treatment in the fight against chronic pain. However, potentially serious gastric side effects are often a deterrent to continued treatment,” says James M. Scheiman, M.D., Division of Gastroenterology, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. “By adding a PPI to long-term treatment with NSAIDs, many Americans may be able to decrease the risk for developing gastric ulcers.”

To learn more about stomach ulcers, talk to your doctor and visit [www.ulcer-risk.com](http://www.ulcer-risk.com).