

DERMATOLOGY

**Aspirin and other drugs
can help fight skin cancer**

Aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Nsaids) taken orally may reduce the risk for squamous cell carcinoma, a review of studies has found.

Squamous cell carcinoma, caused by exposure to ultraviolet light over a lifetime, is the second most common form of skin cancer (after basal cell carcinoma). If caught early, it is almost always curable; left untreated, it can be disfiguring or deadly. A topical Nsaid, diclofenac (brand name Voltaren and others), is used to treat actinic keratoses, a type of lesion that can develop into skin cancer if not treated.

Researchers, writing in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, analyzed data from nine studies of various designs. Some used aspirin and Nsaids, some aspirin or nonaspirin Nsaids alone. Over all, use of Nsaids reduced the risk for squamous cell skin cancer by 18 percent. Using aspirin alone did not reduce risk in a statistically significant way. NICHOLAS BAKALAR

