

J11 Breast Cancer and Asthma

March 2009

Intro: Researchers at Mayo Clinic are exploring an association between the spread of breast cancer and asthma. They published a study suggesting that a woman with breast cancer, as well as asthma, may be at increased risk of that cancer spreading to her lungs. More from Mayo Clinic.

Video

Total running time 1:42

CG :20 to :28

James Lee. Ph.D.

Mayo Clinic

Audio

IN THIS LAB AT MAYO CLINIC, DR. JAMES LEE DISCOVERED AN ASSOCIATION BETWEEN BREAST CANCER AND ASTHMA. HIS RESEARCH, PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL CANCER RESEARCH, SUGGESTS THAT IF A WOMAN HAS RECURRENT BREAST CANCER AND SHE ALSO HAS ASTHMA, SHE MAY BE AT AN INCREASED RISK OF HER BREAST CANCER SPREADING, OR METASTASIZING, TO HER LUNGS. "WOMEN WITH ASTHMA WERE GETTING METS TO THEIR LUNGS ALMOST TWO TIMES GREATER IN FREQUENCY THAN WOMEN WHO DID NOT HAVE ASTHMA."

HERE'S THE THEORY ON WHY THIS MAY HAPPEN. WHEN YOU HAVE AN ALLERGIC ASTHMATIC REACTION IN YOUR LUNGS, THE BLOOD VESSELS IN YOUR LUNGS OPEN GATEWAYS TO ALLOW WHITE BLOOD CELLS IN. IF THERE ARE ANY CANCER CELLS CIRCULATING IN YOUR BLOOD STREAM, THEY TOO CAN ENTER THE LUNGS THROUGH THOSE GATEWAYS. ONCE IN THE LUNGS, THE CANCER CELLS CAN BEGIN TO GROW. DR. LEE SUSPECTS THAT IF BREAST CANCER CELLS CAN ENTER THOSE GATEWAYS TO THE LUNGS, OTHER TYPES OF CANCER MAY BE ABLE TO AS WELL. SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BREAST CANCER PATIENTS WITH ASTHMA? DR. LEE IS WORKING ON

Standup
CG :58 to 1:04
Vivien Williams
Reporting

James Lee, Ph.D.
Mayo Clinic

STUDIES TO SEE IF THIS
ASSOCIATION IS TRUE, AND IF SO
HE HOPES TO DETERMINE
WHETHER TAKING ANTI-
INFLAMMATORY ASTHMA
MEDICATION WILL REDUCE YOUR
CHANCES OF DEVELOPING
METASTASES TO THE LUNG. AND
UNTIL THAT STUDY IS COMPLETE,
HE SUGGESTS IT MAY BE A GOOD
IDEA FOR PATIENTS WITH ASTHMA
TO TAKE THEIR ASTHMA
MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED.
“WE JUST HAVE TO MAKE SURE
THEY TAKE THEIR MEDS, IN A VERY
RELIGIOUS, A RIGHTEOUS WAY,
WHETHER THEIR FEELING BETTER
OR NOT, TAKE YOUR MEDS AND
THAT ALONE MAY HAVE A
SUBSTANTIAL EFFECT ON A LOT
OF THESE PATIENTS.”
FOR MEDICAL EDGE, I’M VIVIEN
WILLIAMS

Anchor tag:

Dr. Lee says up to 8-percent of all women with breast cancer also have asthma. He hopes his research will shed light on the association between the spread of breast cancer and asthma.

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