



May 2011

Study: Tylenol, acetaminophen linked to causing blood cancer

A new study out of the University of Washington (UW) provides even more evidence that taking over-the-counter painkillers can kill you. Published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, the study explains that taking acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol, for extended periods of time can increase a person's risk of developing blood cancer.

Dr. Roland Walter, an assistant professor of medicine at UW, and his colleagues examined data on nearly 65,000 men and women between the ages of 50 and 76 who participated in the Vitamins and Lifestyle (VITAL) study, which was published in the *American*

Journal of Epidemiology in 2004. They found that participants who took acetaminophen at least four days a week over the course of four years were twice as likely to develop certain blood cancers compared to people who took less or none of the drug.

"We found that high use of acetaminophen, one of the most frequently used medications worldwide, was associated with an almost twofold increased risk of incident hematologic malignancies," said Walter, referring to non-Hodgkin lymphomas, plasma cell disorders, and myeloid neoplasms. "Acetaminophen use on the majority of the days over many years appears to be associated with this new adverse effect."