

This Commonly Prescribed Drug Has Been Linked To Diabetes

Source: *MSN Health & Fitness*



It's prime time for more serious bouts of respiratory ailments now that it's winter—or, as doctors probably like to call it, antibiotic prescribing season. But before you willingly take that script for penicillin, you may want to weigh the risks that antibiotic therapy could pose to your health...and your waistline.

New research published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* has found a link between the use of antibiotics and the development of type 2 diabetes.

For the study, Danish researchers tracked data from more than 1.5 million participants and found that those who filled two to four antibiotic prescriptions had a 23 percent higher risk of developing diabetes, compared with those who didn't fill any antibiotic prescriptions. Even worse: Those who had filled five or more prescriptions were 53 percent more likely to develop the disease.

Researchers note the possibility that people with diabetes, and people who are at greater risk of developing diabetes, may be more likely to get sick—ultimately needing antibiotics—than the average, healthy person. But the study found an association between antibiotic use and diabetes up to 15 years before the diabetes diagnosis, suggesting the drugs could be playing a causal role.

This most recent study isn't the only one to look at a relationship between the development of diabetes and antibiotic use. Research published in the *European Journal of Endocrinology* also found a link between the two, saying just two to five courses of penicillin and similar antibiotics greatly increased diabetes risk.

Researchers say that antibiotics' impact on the fragile community of good and bad bacteria in our guts could be what's at play here. Since many antibiotics kill most bacteria (both bad and good), they can drastically disrupt the atmosphere down there, leading to things like insulin sensitivity and glucose intolerance, both of which can lead to the development of diabetes.

That being said, we still don't know for certain if antibiotics directly cause metabolic diseases like diabetes. Until then, be sure to take antibiotics only when you need them—as a remedy for an illness, not as protection against one.