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ASPIRIN LINKED TO BRAIN MICROBLEEDS

According to researchers from Erasmus MC University Medical Center in the Netherlands, aspirin and another platelet aggregation inhibitor, *carbasalate calcium* (Ascal), may increase microbleeds in older adults. Microbleeds—small injuries to tissue in the brain—can indicate that a blood vessel tear or rupture is possible. Some microbleeds result in a hemorrhage that causes a full stroke. About one-third of the group had been taking anticlotting medication prior to the study. *Findings:* Using magnetic resonance imaging, researchers found that past microbleeds were 71% more common in those taking aspirin and carbasalate calcium than in those not taking the drugs.

My view: This study demonstrates yet another significant risk of aspirin use—bleeding in the brain, which

predisposes patients to stroke. As I wrote in the March 2009 issue of *Bottom Line Natural Healing*, I encourage patients to reduce their use of aspirin when possible. Instead, I recommend natural blood thinners, such as fish oil, *nattokinase* (an enzyme extracted from the Japanese food *natto*) and vitamin E, which all are safer when used for long periods.

Reference: M.W. Vernooij, et al., *Archives of Neurology*, April 13, 2009. ■ ■

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