

Re: Fish oil may harm defibrillator patients

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In article <Xns9675B909514B3some1outthere@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, listener <listener@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

- > CHICAGO (Reuters) – Fish oil appears to do more harm than good for heart
- > patients who have surgically implanted defibrillators to shock their
- > weakened hearts back into rhythm, researchers said on Tuesday.
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- > In a study of 200 patients with the electrical devices, half took fish
- > oil supplements and the other half olive oil. Those who consumed fish oil
- > had more episodes of dangerous heart arrhythmia that often precede heart
- > attacks.
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- > Fish oil -- whether absorbed from eating fish such as cod or in
- > supplement form -- has previously been found to reduce by about 25
- > percent the risk of fatal heart attacks in survivors of a previous
- > attack.
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- > Scientists believe the omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids contained in
- > fish oil eases blood flow by reducing lipid levels in the blood. Fish
- > oil's ingredients may also induce changes in heart cell walls that
- > smooths passage of electrical charges that trigger heartbeats.
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- > "We went into the study with the pretty strong belief that fish oil was
- > going to prevent arrhythmia and lessen the shocks that are so
- > uncomfortable," but records from the devices showed fish oil had the
- > opposite effect, study author Merritt Raitt of the Portland, Oregon,
- > Veterans Affairs Medical Center said in an interview.
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- > Nearly two-thirds of the patients who took fish oil and suffered from
- > tachycardia, or rapid heartbeat, had episodes over a six-month period,
- > twice the rate of those taking a placebo. Forty-six percent of the
- > patients who suffered from fibrillation, where the heart flutters, and
- > who took fish oil had episodes compared to 36 percent of placebo-taking
- > patients.
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- > "What may be happening is that fish oil in these patients is
- > proarrhythmic -- making these abnormal rhythms occur when they wouldn't
- > otherwise," Raitt told Reuters.
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- > "Proarrhythmia is a danger with all drugs that affect heart rhythm and is
- > more common the sicker the heart is. So we may just be seeing this
- > particular drug, fish oil, is proarrhythmic in people who have
- > defibrillators."
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- > Roughly 150,000 Americans each year receive the increasingly popular
- > defibrillators, a \$5 billion market shared by Medtronic Inc., Guidant