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Now, if you take the painkiller ibuprofen, you increase the risk of going into hospital with a heart problem by a fifth. A huge study that looked at the use of the drug by nearly 10 million people found that in the fortnight after taking the painkiller,

those with an average age of 77 who took it were 19% more likely to be admitted to hospital with a heart problem. If taken regularly this painkiller can cause heart attack or a truck. Heart failure is the leading cause of hospital admissions for those over 65. With me is Helen Williams, she's a Consultant Pharmacist for Cardiovascular Disease with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. So what should people watching do if they take this painkiller regularly? The headlines are a bit alarming today. Are they accurate? Accurate in relation to this specific study. The patients were on average aged 77. So young patients buying ibuprofen for a sports injury or for

back pain, this isn't a problem for them. We need to reassure them. But for older patients we do need to be cautious. Meaning what? Most older patients are probably not buying the ibuprofen they are taking for things like arthritis, they are getting it from prescription from the GP who will help them to calculate the benefits and the risks of the drug and give them monitoring, we know these things can affect the kidneys so they need regular kidney monitoring when they take these things routinely for this sort of pain. Should we be able to buy this stuff over-the-counter? As I said, for younger patients aged 20, 30, 40, taking these drugs for short courses to treat sharp pain, they are not at risk in this way. It's the older patients who tend to be frailer and have other diseases that put them at risk of problems like hypertension or diabetes and maybe already their kidneys are showing strain. They need to be monitored by a GP and properly supported if they are undergoing this sort of therapy. Broadly speaking, do we use these painkillers to regularly? You can get them in the supermarket. Absolutely. These are anti-inflammatories so suitable for joint or muscle pain, if you have a headache take paracetamol, you don't need anti-inflammatory drugs for that. It's about choosing the right drag the right type of pain. I think what you mean is, if you are around 77 and using please don't immediately stop. You have to go back to your GP and work it out together. There will be risks but also benefits, or else he would not be on it. Absolutely and people, like if people have rheumatoid arthritis, they need the drugs. Are there alternatives, antiinflammatories that don't increase risk of heart

failure? The purpose of the study was to look at all the different types of nonsteroid antiinflammatory and some are much likery to cause heart problems than others, so ibuprofen, that is in the lower end of risk so we are already minimising risk. Also using the lowests do to kill the -- dose to kill the pain and where possible minimising the duration of treatment. Thank you very much.