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She is prescribed diclofenac but research says these and similar painkillers, like ibuprofen and naproxen, increase the risk of heart failure. Now she faces a dilemma. Do I stop taking them and lose part of my independence or do I carry on taking them and, perhaps, put myself at a greater risk? That's the decision most of us out there are going to have to make over the next few weeks. The research has examined 27 non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs being taken on prescription by 10 million people in Europe. Overall, the drugs increased the risk of being admitted to hospital with heart failure by 19% compared to

those not taking them. But the study didn't show the underlying or absolute risk. All medicines have potential side-effects, but the warnings from this research really only apply to the elderly. The average age of the people in this study was 77. For them, doctors need to be careful when prescribing painkillers. As always, it's a balance between risk and benefit. A leading pharmacist sought to reassure the public. There's no need to panic. Younger patients occasionally take these drugs, short courses, and there's no evidence this is a problem. Older patients are generally getting these drugs prescribed by their doctor and their being monitored closely anyway. If people do have concerns, they should speak to their GP or pharmacist, though. Ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatories are very effective medicines. But for the elderly and those at risk of heart disease, they need to be used with care.

Let's return to our top story, the train crash in Hoboken in New Jersey.