**Taking antibiotics for more than two weeks increases your risk of bowel cancer by 73 per cent**

* **Long-term antibiotic use increases the risk of developing bowel polyps**
* **Polyps are small growths on the bowel lining that can turn cancerous**
* **Antibiotic use in middle age appears more dangerous than in earlier life**

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* [e-mail](mailto:?subject=Read%20this:%20Taking%20antibiotics%20for%20more%20than%20two%20weeks%20increases%20your%20risk%20of%20bowel%20cancer%20by%2073%20per%20cent&body=Taking%20antibiotics%20for%20more%20than%20two%20weeks%20increases%20your%20risk%20of%20bowel%20cancer%20by%2073%20per%20cent%0A%0AScientists%20have%20found%20%20long-term%20antibiotic%20use%20increases%20the%20risk%20of%20developing%20bowel%20polyps%2C%20according%20to%20a%20paper%20in%20the%20journal%20Gut.%20Polyps%20grow%20on%20the%20bowel%20lining%20and%20can%20turn%20cancerous.%0A%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4381682%2FLong-term-antibiotic-use-raise-bowel-cancer-risk.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top%0A%0A%0AMost%20Read%20Articles%3A%0A%0AKey%20gene%20is%20identified%20in%20hunt%20for%20Crohn%27s%20cure%3A%20Researchers%20claim%20new%20treatment%20for%20incurable%20bowel%20disease%20may%20soon%20be%20found%C2%A0%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4505418%2FKey-gene-identified-hunt-Crohn-s-cure.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0APorn%20triggers%20erectile%20dysfunction%20in%20men%20but%20doesn%27t%20affect%20the%20sex%20lives%20of%20women%2C%20research%20reveals%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4506968%2FPorn-causes-erectile-dysfunction-men-research-finds.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0AThe%20takeaways%20that%20can%20boost%20your%20brain%20power%3A%20Why%20eating%20egg%20fried%20rice%20and%20Neapolitan%20pizza%20can%20help%20students%20score%20top%20marks%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4506348%2FTakeaways-pizza-boost-brain-power.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0A)

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Taking antibiotics for 15 days or longer may increase your risk of developing bowel cancer by a massive 73 per cent.

Scientists have found long-term antibiotic use increases the risk of developing bowel polyps.

Polyps are small growths on the lining of the bowel that can become cancerous.

Taking the drugs in your forties and fifties was found to increase the risk more than in your twenties or thirties.

This may add to the theory that our gut bacteria plays a critical role in our cancer risk.

Just 15 days of antibiotic use may increase your risk of developing bowel cancer by 73 per cent

Although antibiotics are typically only prescribed for up to seven days, conditions including acne and tuberculosis may require long-term treatment.

Published in the journal Gut, scientists analysed data from over 16,000 women aged over 60.

They found taking antibiotics for at least 15 days between the ages of 20 and 39, and 40 and 59 vastly increased the risk of developing polyps compared to non-antibiotic users.

Just two months of antibiotic use between the ages of 20 and 39 increased the womens' polyp risk by 36 per cent.

While women taking the drugs in their forties or fifties had a 69 per cent higher risk over non-users.

It is unclear why older women are more at risk than those in their twenties or thirties.

Antibiotic use within the past four years was not associated with a raised polyp risk.

Long-term antibiotic use in your forties and fifties may be more dangerous than in earlier life

These findings suggest antibiotic use may need to be limited, according to the scientists.

Yet, they stress that further investigation is needed and people should not stop taking their antibiotics for the time being.

It's also unclear how many of these polyps became cancerous, the scientists said.

Dr Sheena Cruickshank, immunology expert, the University of Manchester said: 'Antibiotics are crucial medicines for treating bacterial infections and, if prescribed and used appropriately, can be life-saving,' the [**BBC**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-39495192) reported.

**THE LOW-DOWN ON BOWEL CANCER**

Bowel cancer is the most common cancer in the UK after breast, prostate and lung

41,000 people are diagnosed each year in the UK

Common symptoms include persistent blood in the stools, change in bowel habits and pain or bloating in the abdomen

A diet high in red or processed meat and low in fibre increases the risk

It is also more common in people who are overweight, inactive, smokers and heavy drinkers

Removal of the affected part of the bowel is often the most effective treatment

Source: Bowel Cancer UK and NHS Choices

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4381682/Long-term-antibiotic-use-raise-bowel-cancer-risk.html#ixzz4hA1Gx87P>   
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