

FILE NAME: Talc (TALC)

DATE: 1982 Aug 6

DOC#: TALC025

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Newspaper Article - Study Links Talcum Powder Use to Ovarian Cancer

Study links talcum powder use to ovarian cancer

Sun

Boston (AP)—Talcum powder has been linked to ovarian cancer in a study that found women who dusted their genitals and sanitary napkins with talc were three times as likely to develop tumors.

The study, done by Brigham and Women's Hospital here, compared the hygiene habits of 215 Boston-area women who had ovarian cancer to a control group of 215 healthy women.

It found that 32 women with the cancer used talcum powder on their genitals and sanitary napkins. Only 13 of the women in the non-cancer group

used the talc in that way.

Other factors considered in the study raise the risk of ovarian cancer to 3.28 times greater for women who use talc than for women who don't, the report said.

The survey found that women whose genitals had some exposure to talcum powder had almost a two-fold cancer risk.

The study was the first of its kind to link talc use to ovarian cancer, the fifth leading cause of cancer deaths among women. An estimated 18,000 cases are diagnosed a year, and

12,000 women die from the disease annually.

Dr. Daniel W. Cramer, the obstetrician and gynecologist who wrote of the findings in the July edition of the journal *Cancer*, said further studies are needed before doctors could recommend that women should not use talc.

"We would like to see other researchers find the same thing and we would like to see animal experiments," he said.

But he said he now advises patients to use other products, such as

cornstarch-based powders or creams.

"I do make a comment that maybe it isn't such a good idea" to use talc, he said. "I think the evidence is rather tenuous in relationship to talc and ovarian cancer, but the use of talc on the genitals has rather marginal benefits, so I caution my patients."

He said most of the body powders on the market are talc-based, and the ingredients usually are marked.

Dr. Cramer said talc is a magnesium silicate similar to asbestos, which has been linked to lung cancer.

Baltimore Sun
Aug. 6, 1982