An Approved Cold Medicine May Help Fight Cancer

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It would be great if there was an inexpensive, approved, non-toxic treatment for cancer. An international team of investigators has identified just such a drug. The chemical, N-acetylcysteine (NAC) is an antioxidant that is used to treat colds and other conditions. The researchers gave early-stage breast cancer patients NAC for 2-4 weeks prior to their surgeries.

Samples from before and after treatment showed that the patients treated with NAC had reductions in three markers of cancer aggression. The sample was small, but the results are encouraging, and additional work is planned.

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