



Australian Self-Medication Industry Inc  
Suite 2203, Level 22, 141 Walker Street,  
North Sydney NSW 2060  
PO Box 764, North Sydney NSW 2059  
Ph +61 2 9922 5111 Fax +61 2 9959 3693  
Email: info@asmi.com.au www.asmi.com.au  
ABN 55 082 798 952

20 April 2010

# MEDIA STATEMENT

## Consumers reassured about use of multivitamins

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI), the industry body representing non-prescription consumer healthcare products, said today that consumers who use multivitamins need not be alarmed by media reports associating the use of these products with increased risk of breast cancer.

The reports stem from a Swedish study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

ASMI Regulatory & Technical Manager for Complementary Medicines, Ruth Kendon said the nature of the study leaves considerable doubt as to whether there is any causal relationship between the use of multivitamins and the higher than normal incidence of breast cancer.

The authors note that a limitation of the study was that use of dietary supplements was assessed by way of a self-administered questionnaire, which means that the data may be inaccurate.

Also, it is not possible to know the nature of the multivitamins and supplements that were being consumed, leading to uncertainty about whether certain products may have been responsible for the elevated breast cancer finding.

Even if the statistical link was established, it is entirely possible that the reported rates of breast cancer were due to outside factors, not associated with the use of multivitamins.

Ms Kendon said that consumers who use multivitamins should not be overly concerned at the findings. The benefits of multivitamins to general health and wellbeing are well-established and thousands of Australians use them regularly.

A separate study on the topic, funded by the US National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health, was presented last week to the American Association for Cancer Research, and is soon to be published. The trial compared women with breast cancer to healthy matched controls and the results showed that multivitamin use reduced the risk of cancer by 30%.

Anyone who is concerned about the use of multivitamins should consult their healthcare provider.

---

About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI's mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au)

**Media contact:** Bob Bowden, Foresight Communications  
(02) 9241 2811, 0412 753 298