

COX-2 inhibitor

COX-2 inhibitors are a type of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that directly targets cyclooxygenase-2, COX-2, an enzyme responsible for inflammation and pain. Targeting selectivity for COX-2 reduces the risk of peptic ulceration and is the main feature of celecoxib, rofecoxib, and other members of this drug class.

After several COX-2-inhibiting drugs were approved for marketing, data from clinical trials revealed that COX-2 inhibitors caused a significant increase in heart attacks and strokes, with some drugs in the class having worse risks than others. Rofecoxib (commonly known as Vioxx) was taken off the market in 2004 because of these concerns, and celecoxib and traditional NSAIDs received boxed warnings on their labels. Many COX-2-specific inhibitors have been removed from the US market. As of December 2011, only Celebrex (generic name is celecoxib) is still available for purchase in the United States.

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