

# Daily Aspirin Therapy



Taking aspirin on a daily basis for “therapy” has been effective in treating patients with cardiovascular disease. Clinical studies show that aspirin reduces the rate of heart attack and stroke. The ability of aspirin to prevent blood from clotting lowers the risk of these events occurring. If a heart attack or stroke does occur, aspirin often reduces the severity of the event.

Daily aspirin therapy has also proven to slow the progression of colon cancer, and in some cases may prevent or lower the risk of getting certain cancers.

Studies also report that taking aspirin daily will prevent or slow the progression of dementia.

## Who Should Take an Aspirin a Day?

The American Heart Association (AHA) currently recommends that patients who have experienced a heart attack, unstable angina, ischemic stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA's or mini-strokes) should consult their physician about starting daily aspirin therapy. ***It is important to know that daily aspirin therapy should only be considered after consultation with your physician.***

## What Are the Side Effects?

Aspirin, like any other medication has side effects. Some of the most common side effects are stomach pain, heartburn, nausea and vomiting. An aspirin overdose or taking a higher dosage than recommended can result in serious health consequences. Depending on the dosage, aspirin can increase the risk of bleeding complications in the stomach and intestines.

Patients with medical conditions, such as pregnancy, high blood pressure, bleeding disorders, asthma, stomach ulcers, and liver and kidney disease, should not use aspirin. Aspirin may not mix well with other medicines (prescription and over-the-counter), vitamins, herbals, or dietary supplements. Patients who are already using a prescribed medicine to thin the blood should talk to a health professional before using aspirin, even occasionally. It is important to discuss the use of all medicines, vitamins and dietary supplements with your health professional before using aspirin daily.

## What Dosage Is Recommended?

There are no directions on the label for using aspirin to reduce the risk of heart attack or clot-related stroke. Your health professional can provide the dose and directions that will give you the most benefit with the fewest side effects. Whether you are using aspirin daily to lower the risk of a heart attack or a clot-related stroke, or for any other purpose not listed on the aspirin's label, the dose does matter. It is important that the dose you use and the frequencies with which you use it are right for you.

## Questions for Your Health Professional:

- Is aspirin therapy right for me?
- What dosage is best for me?
- Does it matter what time of day I take aspirin? Should I take it with food?
- Will it affect other medications I am taking?
- If I experience stomachaches, can I reduce the dosage?
- Is there any other medication that may accomplish the same thing with fewer side effects?
- Does the brand of aspirin matter? Should I take enteric-coated or regular aspirin?
- If I miss a day or two, am I at higher risk for heart attack?
- What dosage of aspirin should I chew if I think I'm having a heart attack?
- When do I stop taking aspirin?