

Aspirin (low dose)

Information for Patients

The dose of aspirin which has been prescribed for you is

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Why has my doctor given me low dose aspirin?

Low doses of aspirin reduce the risk of further problems with your heart or circulation. Aspirin can be used to reduce the risk of having a heart attack or stroke. If you have had a heart attack aspirin can be used to help reduce the risk of having a further attack.

Check with your doctor if you are still not sure why you need to take low dose aspirin.

How does it work?

Aspirin helps to prevent blood clots forming in the blood vessels which feed the heart muscle. Clots can block these vessels causing heart attacks. Low dose aspirin means that the dose is 75mg, 150mg or 300mg taken once a day. These doses are much smaller than those for pain relief or fever.

How should I take my aspirin?

Always follow the instructions on the label, however, this will usually mean taking your aspirin once every day preferably after food. Do not stop taking this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop. If you take the soluble tablets you can dissolve them in a glass of water. If you take the coated tablets swallow them whole with a full glass of water and avoid taking medicines for indigestion two hours either side of taking your aspirin.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for the next dose, do not take the one you missed. Take the next dose at the usual time. Do not double up the next dose.

What are the side effects of aspirin?

All drugs have side effects but most people will not experience them.

At this low dose side effects are rare. However, aspirin can sometimes irritate the stomach. If this happens always take your aspirin after food or with a glass of milk. If you develop heartburn, indigestion or your bowel motions become black, contact your doctor for further advice.

Some people are allergic to aspirin. This is more common in people who have asthma. If your breathing feels tight after taking aspirin contact your doctor as soon as you can.

Can I take other medicines while taking aspirin?

Yes, but some other medicines contain aspirin and these should be avoided. Aspirin only prevents blood clots when used in a low dose. A higher dose of aspirin is needed for pain relief, fever or headaches, therefore you must avoid taking any additional aspirin for these conditions. It is important that you check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicines including ones that you buy over the counter, especially cold or flu remedies to make sure that they do not contain aspirin. By taking more aspirin than you are prescribed you will lose the beneficial effects from taking low dose aspirin. A suitable alternative for pain relief or for reducing fever is paracetamol.

This leaflet is not intended as a substitute for any advice that your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you.

More detailed information can be obtained from the manufacturers information leaflet.

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