



Before Using Aspirin to Lower Your Risk of Heart Attack or Stroke, Here is What You Should Know

Only a health professional can safely decide if the regular use of aspirin to prevent a heart attack or stroke is right for you

Aspirin. It's often thought of as one of those harmless over-the-counter drugs that you've relied on for years to fight pain, swelling, headache and fever. Now you're hearing that it can also lower your risk of a heart attack, some kinds of strokes and other very specific heart and blood vessel diseases. Then why not use an aspirin a day? No need to bother your health professional with questions about something so simple, right? **Wrong.** Although aspirin may seem like a quick and easy solution to any fears you might have, it's not as simple as you think.

If you're using aspirin to lower your chance of a heart attack or clot-related stroke and you haven't talked with a health professional about it, read on. The information here could help you avoid risks and stay healthy.

Aspirin: What the Studies Show

It's been about one hundred years since aspirin was created, and in that time, it has played a major role in treating headaches, fevers, minor aches and pains for millions of people. Now there are studies that show it is also helpful in lowering the chance of a heart attack, clot-related stroke, and for increasing blood flow to the heart or brain in people with evidence of poor circulation.

Most health professionals agree that long-term aspirin use to prevent a heart attack or stroke in healthy people is unnecessary. **If you are using aspirin to lower the risk of a heart attack and stroke and you have not yet talked with a health professional about it, you may be putting your health at risk. You should ONLY use aspirin daily under the guidance of a health professional.**



For more information: Visit www.fda.gov or call toll-free 1-888-INFO-FDA



Maintaining Good Health: Important Tips from FDA

Aspirin: Not Without Risks

Aspirin has been known to help people that are living with some kinds of heart and blood vessel diseases. It can help prevent a heart attack or clot-related stroke by lowering the clotting action of the blood's platelets. The same properties that make aspirin work in stopping blood from clotting may also cause unwanted side effects such as, stomach bleeding, bleeding in the brain, kidney failure, and other kinds of strokes. If your health professional agrees to your use of daily aspirin treatment, you'll need his or her medical knowledge and guidance to help you prevent unwanted side effects.

Aspirin is a drug that can mix badly with other medicines (prescription and over-the-counter), vitamins, herbals or dietary supplements. People who are already using a prescribed medication to thin the blood should talk to a health professional before using aspirin, even occasionally. Additionally, there are a number of vitamins and dietary supplements that are known to thin blood. Discuss the use of all medicines, vitamins and dietary supplements with your health professional before using aspirin daily.

Aspirin: Dose Matters

Whether you are using aspirin daily to lower the risk of a heart attack, clot-related stroke, or you're using it for any other purpose that is not listed on the aspirin's label, the dose you use does matter. It's important to your health that the dose you use and the frequency with which you use it is right for you. You can rely on your health professional in providing you with the dosing and directions that will give you the most benefit with the fewest side effects. Also, discuss with your health professional the different forms of aspirin products that might be best suited for you.

Remember, not all over-the-counter pain relievers are the same. Aspirin products have been found to lower the risk of a heart attack and clot-related stroke for people who already have evidence of poor blood flow to the heart or brain. But, not all over-the-counter pain relievers have aspirin. Read the label carefully. Some drug products combine aspirin with other pain relievers or with certain other ingredients and should not be used for long-term aspirin treatment. If you have questions talk to your health professional.

Before you use aspirin to lower your risk of heart attack and stroke, talk to a health professional. It could save your life.



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