

# Daily Aspirin Therapy for Heart Health

Heart disease is a concern for many Americans and is the leading killer of women in the U.S. Along with a healthy diet and exercise, those at risk of a heart attack or stroke can take another precaution to reduce their risks – a daily dose of aspirin.

According to the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, taking an aspirin daily can actually lower the risk of heart attack and stroke, as it interferes with the body's blood clotting action.

As blood clots within the vessels that supply blood to your heart and brain, it can block arteries that are already narrowed due to the buildup of fatty deposits. When this occurs, blood cannot flow to the heart and brain successfully, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke. However, by taking aspirin on a regular basis, you can reduce clotting and potentially prevent a heart attack or stroke.

## Is Aspirin Therapy Right for Me?

Taking a daily dose of aspirin is not right for everyone and it is ultimately up to you and your doctor to determine if this therapy will benefit your current health condition. Those who will typically benefit from daily aspirin therapy are:

- Smokers
- Those with high blood pressure
- People with a total cholesterol level of 240 mg/dL or higher
- Those with a low-density lipoprotein ("bad" cholesterol) level of 130 mg/dL or higher

- Those who lack regular physical activity
- Diabetics
- People experiencing lots of stress
- Men who consume more than two alcoholic drinks per day or women who consume more than one alcoholic drink per day
- People with a family history of heart attack or stroke

Though you may be afflicted with some of these risk factors, daily aspirin therapy may not be for you if you have any of these conditions:

- Suffering from a bleeding or clotting disorder
- Asthma
- Stomach ulcers
- Heart failure
- Taking certain medications that may increase your chance of bleeding

## Dosage

There is no uniform aspirin dosage that suits all patients with heart disease risk factors. Some patients benefit from 75 mg, which is less than one baby aspirin, while others benefit from 325 mg, or the potency of one regular aspirin.

## Side Effects

There are several side effects of taking daily aspirin therapy that you should discuss with your doctor before beginning this regime. They include:

- Hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding stroke)
- Gastrointestinal bleeding (development of a stomach ulcer)
- Allergic reaction
- Ringing in the ears and hearing loss
- Negative interactions with alcohol

Talk with your doctor about this inexpensive, readily available preventive treatment for heart disease to determine if it is right for you.



## Did You Know...?

Abruptly stopping daily aspirin therapy can actually have adverse effects on your health and may cause blood clots to form. Before stopping this preventive treatment, talk with your doctor about how to do so safely.