

Weekly Wellness Tip

An aspirin a day

For years, people have been turning to aspirin as a remedy for simple aches, pains, and fevers. But, this wonder drug has other benefits, too. Years of medical studies show that taking aspirin every day can help prevent heart attacks and strokes for many people.

How it works. Arteries can be injured by high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking. Eventually, a clot may form at the injury site, blocking the flow of blood. If this happens in the heart or brain, a heart attack or stroke occurs. Aspirin may help prevent these dangerous clots by blocking an enzyme that promotes clotting.

Who may benefit. Daily aspirin may be a good choice if:

- You have heart or vascular disease
- You've had a heart attack or stroke
- You have diabetes

Recommended dose. The American Heart Association recommends 75 milligrams to 162 milligrams a day. That's the amount in a low-dose aspirin or up to half a regular aspirin tablet.

Possible side effects. Many people take daily low-dose aspirin without any problem. But, all medicines may have side effects. For some people, aspirin use may lead to an upset stomach, allergic reactions, ringing in the ears, and unusual bruising. Aspirin may also interact with other medications.

Never give aspirin to anyone younger than 19 years of age. Aspirin is linked to Reye's syndrome, a rare but sometimes fatal condition.

Should you take a daily aspirin? Maybe. Be sure to consult your medical provider first. This is especially important if you are pregnant or have:

- High blood pressure
- A bleeding disorder
- Stomach ulcers
- Kidney or liver disease
- Asthma

Before deciding whether daily aspirin use is right for you, your medical provider will weigh the possible risks and benefits. If aspirin gets the green light, put safety first by following your provider's directions. Be sure you know how much to take, when to take it, and what side effects to watch for. With the proper precautions, aspirin could significantly lower your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Source: UnitedHealthcare

Don't mix alcohol and aspirin

People who regularly take aspirin shouldn't drink alcohol. Doing so can increase the risk of side effects, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

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