How much aspirin should you take?

If you and your provider decide that aspirin is right for you, then you should take either:

- One baby aspirin (81 mg) every day OR
- One regular aspirin (325 mg) every other day.

Taking more aspirin is not any better and can cause serious stomach bleeding. If you have side effects, tell your provider.

Here are some questions to ask your provider:

- ❑ What are my chances of having a heart attack?
- ❑ Would I benefit from taking aspirin?
- ❑ Would I be harmed by taking aspirin?
- ❑ Will aspirin interfere with my other medications?
- ❑ How long should I take aspirin?

Do you have other questions for your provider? Write them down here.

For more information, please contact your local VA Medical Center or Health Clinic.

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NCP

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Partnership for HEALTH

Heart and Circulation

For Men

Talk With Your Health Care Provider About

Taking Aspirin to Prevent Heart Attacks

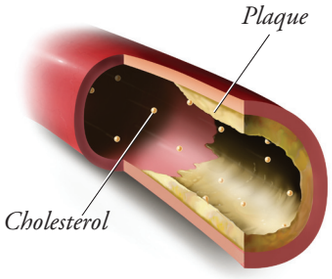
Department of Veterans Affairs

Did you know that aspirin can be an easy and inexpensive way to help men prevent heart attacks?

How does aspirin help *men* prevent heart attacks?

Plaque is a sticky substance that sometimes builds up and blocks arteries that carry blood to the heart. This can cause heart disease, including angina ("AN-je-nah") and heart attacks. Aspirin can help blood flow smoothly to the heart.

Diagram of inside view of blood vessel



If you are a man aged 45–79, talk with your provider about whether to take aspirin to reduce the chances of a heart attack.

Does aspirin also help *women* prevent heart attacks?

Aspirin is NOT useful for preventing heart attacks in women, but it IS USEFUL for preventing strokes. Please see the brochure *Talk with Your Health Care Provider About Taking Aspirin to Prevent Strokes* for more information.

What increases the chances of having a heart attack?

The older you are, the greater the chances that you can have a heart attack.

Other risk factors for heart attack include:

- ❑ High blood pressure
- ❑ Diabetes
- ❑ High cholesterol level
- ❑ Smoking

The more of these risk factors you have, the greater your chances of having a heart attack.

How much can aspirin reduce the chance of having a heart attack?

It depends on your age, your health, and your lifestyle.

If you smoke, the best way to prevent a heart attack is to quit smoking.

Whether you smoke or not, taking aspirin gives you some protection against a heart attack. In general, aspirin reduces the chance of a first heart attack by about 32% in men.

You can use the following website to calculate your specific chance of a heart attack. You can also see how much aspirin will reduce your chances: *http://healthlink.mcw.edu/article/923521437.html.*

Is there any harm in taking aspirin?

Taking aspirin can cause bleeding in the stomach. This can sometimes be serious. This risk increases with age. This risk also increases if aspirin is used together with another anti-inflammatory medicine like ibuprofen or naprosyn (Advil®, Motrin®, Naproxen®, Aleve®, etc.).

Taking aspirin also increases the chances of a rare kind of stroke.

Should you take aspirin?

It's always a good idea to talk with your provider before taking aspirin to prevent a heart attack.

- If you have already had a heart attack, you should take aspirin unless your provider says not to.
- If your chances of a heart attack are high, the benefits of taking aspirin probably outweigh the harms.
- Older people are more likely to have a heart attack. But, they are also more likely to have serious stomach bleeding if they take aspirin.