



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.

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.

What increases the chances of having a heart attack?

The older you are, the greater the chances of a heart attack.

Other risk factors include:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol level
- Diabetes
- 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. (For assistance, call the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line at 877-270-7867 or 800-784-8669.)

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

Is there any harm in taking aspirin?

Taking aspirin can cause bleeding in the stomach. This can sometimes be serious. The 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 doctor before taking aspirin to prevent a heart attack. If you have already had a heart attack, you should take aspirin unless your doctor 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.

How much aspirin should you take?

If you and your doctor decide that aspirin is right for you, then you should take either:
1 low-dose Aspirin (81mg) every day OR 1 regular Aspirin (325 mg) every other day.

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

Talk with your doctor about how taking Aspirin can help prevent heart attacks.

For more information on how taking aspirin can help prevent heart attacks, contact Physicians Plus at (608) 282-8900 or (800) 545-5015.

Here are some questions to ask your doctor:

- 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?
- Other questions I have for my doctor (write them down here):