Low-Dose Aspirin

Why Would I Take Low-Dose Aspirin During Pregnancy?

- Low-dose aspirin is used to lower the chances that you will get a disease called preeclampsia.
- Preeclampsia is a serious pregnancy complication that includes very high blood pressure and other problems.
- People with certain risk factors for preeclampsia will benefit from low-dose aspirin.
- Aspirin started during the second trimester of pregnancy reduces the chances of getting preeclampsia during the third trimester by about 15%.

Do I Have Risk Factors?

High risk level

- ☐ Preeclampsia in a prior pregnancy
- ☐ Twin or triplet pregnancy (or more)
- ☐ Chronic hypertension
- ☐ Diabetes
- ☐ Kidney disease
- ☐ Autoimmune disease

Moderate risk level

- ☐ No prior delivery
- ☐ 35 years or older
- ☐ Obesity
- ☐ In vitro fertilization (IVF)
- ☐ Your mother or sister had preeclampsia
- ☐ African-American ethnicity
- ☐ Previous child with low birth weight
- ☐ You were born with low birth weight
- ☐ Low income
- ☐ More than 10 years since your last delivery

Who Recommends Using Low-Dose Aspirin?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) both recommend that low-dose aspirin should be taken by patients who have:

- Any high-risk factor
- More than one moderate-risk factor

What Dose of Aspirin Is Recommended?

- The only dose labelled as “low-dose aspirin” in the United States is 81 mg.
- Both ACOG and USPSTF recommend one tablet daily.
- Some doctors recommend two tablets daily (162 mg).
- Doses of 50, 75 or 100 mg are available in other countries.
    - If you have any of these doses, ask your doctor which dose is right for you.

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Which Type of Low-Dose Aspirin Is Best to Take During Pregnancy?

- Any brand of low-dose aspirin sold in the United States is fine. The FDA requires all manufacturers to meet the same strict standards to guarantee purity and potency.
- It is not known whether "enteric-coated aspirin" is better. The coating is intended to prevent stomach irritation, ulcers and heartburn. However, the coating may also reduce the effectiveness by reducing the amount of aspirin absorbed by your body.

When Should I Start Low-Dose Aspirin?

- The best time to start low-dose aspirin is at 12 to 16 weeks of pregnancy.
- If you are already past 16 weeks, you may start it at any time.
- You may take aspirin at any time of day. It is best to develop a pattern of taking it at the same time every day. For example, take it when you take your prenatal vitamin.

Do I Need a Prescription?

- No prescription is needed.
- Over-the-counter low-dose aspirin should cost less than $10 for a bottle of 200 tablets, enough to last your entire pregnancy.

Can I Wait Until I Show Signs of Preeclampsia to Start Aspirin?

- No. Low-dose aspirin is used to prevent preeclampsia, not to treat it.
- Aspirin has no benefit once preeclampsia appears.
- To be effective, aspirin must be started during the second trimester and best before 16 weeks.

What If I Miss a Dose?

- If you miss a day, just resume taking daily aspirin the next day.
- There is no reason to double-up the dose the next day.
- Don't miss too many doses. Aspirin is much less effective if you miss more than 10% (1 of every 10).

When Should I Stop Low-Dose Aspirin?

- Aspirin may be continued throughout pregnancy.
- Some doctors recommend stopping once you reach 37 weeks.

Are There Any Other Benefits of Low-Dose Aspirin?

Yes. In addition to reducing the chances of preeclampsia, clinical trials have shown that aspirin also:

- Reduces the chance of a preterm birth by about 20%
- Reduces the chance of a growth-restricted baby (small for gestational age) by about 20%
- Reduces the chances of perinatal death (stillbirth or newborn death) by about 20%

Is Taking Low-Dose Aspirin Safe?

- Low-dose aspirin (81 mg daily) is safe for you and your fetus (unborn baby).
- It has been used safely in tens of thousands of pregnancies without increased bleeding, miscarriage or birth defects.

Are There Any Cautions About Using Low-Dose Aspirin During Pregnancy?

- Make sure your doctor knows about all other medications you are taking.
- Aspirin is not recommended for people who are allergic to aspirin or related medications, such as ibuprofen.
    - Aspirin allergy can occur in anyone, but it is more common in people who have had nasal polyps, asthma and hives.
    - Seek urgent medical attention if you have signs of an allergic reaction, such as unexplained wheezing, rash or swelling of the lips, face or body.
- Let your doctor know if you have bleeding while taking aspirin. They may recommend stopping aspirin temporarily.
- Some people get mild indigestion after taking aspirin. Taking aspirin with food may help prevent indigestion.
- Low-dose aspirin is not recommended for people who do not have any risk factors for preeclampsia.

Aspirin Is NOT for Babies!

- You may hear people use the words “baby aspirin” to describe low-dose aspirin.
- There is no medication in the United States labelled as “baby aspirin.”
- Aspirin in any dose can be dangerous for children and should not be given to a baby, child or teenager without your doctor’s consent.
- Even if aspirin is flavored, chewable or liquid, it does not mean it is intended to be given to babies.
- Low-dose aspirin is for adults only.
- You should find low-dose aspirin in the adult section of the pharmacy, not the children’s section.
- Do not substitute children’s Tylenol (acetaminophen) or other children’s medicine for low-dose aspirin. Only low-dose aspirin prevents preeclampsia.

Advice for You

The provider who gives you this flyer will check the boxes below if they are recommending aspirin.

Recommended aspirin dosage:

- ☐ One 81 mg tablet daily
- ☐ Two 81 mg tablets daily

Recommended start date:

- ☐ At 12 weeks of pregnancy (date):_____
- ☐ Now

Provider signature_____ Date _____ Time_____

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2021/12/low-dose-aspirin-use-for-the-prevention-of-preeclampsia-and-related-morbidity-and-mortality

Preeclampsia Foundation
preeclampsia.org/prenatal-aspirin

US Preventive Services Task Force
uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/low-dose-aspirin-use-for-the-prevention-of-morbidity-and-mortality-from-preeclampsia-preventive-medication

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