

## 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 stroke?
- 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 speak with your doctor or nurse.



### Heart and Circulation

### For Women

Talk With Your Health Care Provider About

# Taking Aspirin to Prevent Strokes



This brochure was produced by:



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration, Office of Patient Care Services  
National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention  
[www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov)

and



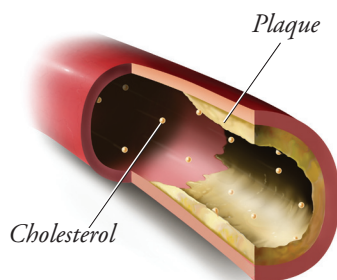
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
US Preventive Services Task Force  
[www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov](http://www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov)

## Did you know that aspirin can be an easy and inexpensive way to help women prevent strokes?

### How does aspirin help *women* prevent strokes?

Plaque is a sticky substance that sometimes builds up and blocks arteries in the neck. These arteries are supposed to take blood to the brain, but when an artery is blocked, a stroke can occur. Aspirin can help blood flow smoothly to the brain.

Diagram of inside view of blood vessel



**If you are a woman aged 55–79, talk with your provider about whether to take aspirin to reduce the chances of a stroke.**

### Does aspirin also help *men* prevent strokes?

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

### What increases the chances of having a stroke?

The older you are, the greater the chance that you can have a stroke.

Other risk factors for stroke include:

- Atrial fibrillation (a type of irregular heart beat)
- Heart disease
- An enlarged heart
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Smoking

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

### How much can aspirin reduce the chance of having a stroke?

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

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



Whether you smoke or not, taking aspirin gives you some protection against a stroke. In general, aspirin reduces the chance of a first stroke by about 17% in women.

### 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.).

While aspirin can prevent one type of stroke, it does increase the chances of a rare, different kind of stroke.

### Should you take aspirin?

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

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