

Aspirin

Benefits of Aspirin

In the United States approximately 1.5 million people have heart attacks each year. 500,000 of those die within the first 30 days following the attack. Most deaths occur within the first 24 hours. Coronary heart disease costs the United States more than \$60 billion a year in direct care, lost wages, and productivity. It accounts for 43 percent of all deaths, claiming a life every 34 seconds. In this country about 500,000 strokes occur at an estimated cost of \$13-14 billion.

In the 4th century, B.C., Hippocrates, a practicing physician in Greece, used to prescribe salicylic acid which came from the willow bark tree. In the 19th century, a German chemist by the name of Hoffman who worked for the Bayer Company modified salicylic acid into acetylsalicylic acid which was shown to reduce pain and inflammation in the body. Aspirin works by blocking the production of prostaglandin's, a substance that promotes the formation of blood clots.

Today, millions of Americans are taking aspirin to prevent heart attacks, strokes, and even certain forms of cancer. In 1993, we took over 30 billion aspirin tablets at a cost of \$1 billion.

Support for the usage of Aspirin

1. A study was done at Harvard Medical School from 1982 to 1988, with 22,000 physicians over the age of 50. They took 325 mg of aspirin every other day for five years and reduced the incidence of heart attacks by 44 percent.
2. A recent study revealed that when aspirin is given just after a heart attack it reduces the overall death rate by 23 percent and the risk

- of a second heart attack by 50 percent when administered after a heart attack.
3. In another study 90,000 nurses took between one and six tablets of aspirin per week and reduced their risk of heart attacks by 25 percent.
 4. Aspirin also decreases the incidence of occlusive strokes by 20 to 50 percent. These types of strokes are caused when a clot forms inside an artery supplying the brain. This reduces blood flow, decreases oxygen, and results in paralysis.
 5. The American Cancer Society recently revealed that death rates from gastrointestinal cancers were reduced by 40 percent. In men and women who consumed an average of 16 or more aspirin tablets per month than those who did not. (Colon cancer leads to over 80,000 deaths per year in the United States.)

Aspirin decreases the incidence of:

- Heart attacks
- Stokes (occlusive types)
- Cancer such as esophagus, stomach, colon, and rectal
- Migraines
- Inflammation, fever, and pain
- Hypertension during pregnancy
- Cataracts

Aspirin Side Effects

Even though aspirin may be a wonderful product which cuts the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and certain forms of cancers, it can also be potentially dangerous. It can lead to bleeding disorders, such as ulcers, hemorrhagic strokes and even death.

Other problems associated aspirin usage include:

- Reduce sperm motility (by 50%) in men. Therefore, if you are a male and trying to have children, refrain from taking aspirin.
- Stomach pain, heartburn, nausea, constipation, GI bleeding and hemorrhagic stroke.
- Depressed kidney function in certain individuals. Aspirin is known to decrease the excretion of uric acid by the kidneys. Gout is caused by the excess accumulation of uric acid in certain joints in the body, such as the big toe. Therefore, aspirin should be avoided by anyone suffering from gout.
- Breathing difficulties for individual with a history of asthma.
- Increased risk of hemorrhagic stroke which results from a blood vessel rupture in the brain.
- Increased clotting time in the body. If you accidentally cut yourself and are taking aspirin or aspirin-like products, you may notice it takes longer for you to stop bleeding. Therefore, if you plan to have major or minor surgery you should always stop taking aspirin seven to ten days before the procedure.

So Who Should Take Aspirin?

If you're 50 or older, and you don't have ulcers or other bleeding disorders, consult your physician. Taking aspirin may help.

How Much Aspirin Should You Take?

Generally, if you are an adult who is 50 or older you can take up to one 325 milligram tablet every other day. Also, evidence suggests taking 80 mg every day might produce similar benefits with less side effects.

(Warning: If you wish to take Aspirin or Aspirin related products for the prevention of certain diseases or for other related disorders, you should first consult with your physician)