

Patient information factsheet

Low-dose aspirin (150mg) in pregnancy

You have been given this factsheet because you have been advised to take a low dose of aspirin (150mg) once a day between 12 and 36 weeks of pregnancy.

This factsheet is about the use of low-dose aspirin (150mg) only.

What is low-dose aspirin?

Aspirin is a blood-thinning medication. It is known as an NSAID (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug). Aspirin is often used to treat pain, fever or inflammation.

You have been advised to take a **low dose of 150mg once a day**.

Taking a low dose of aspirin may help to reduce the risk of:

- developing hypertension (high blood pressure) and pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure and excessive protein in your urine)
- giving birth to your baby prematurely (before 37 weeks)
- your baby being smaller than expected

Your midwife or obstetrician (a doctor who specialises in care during pregnancy, labour and after birth) may recommend that you take low-dose aspirin if:

- you had hypertension (high blood pressure) during a previous pregnancy
- you have chronic kidney disease
- you have an autoimmune disease (for example, lupus or antiphospholipid syndrome)
- you have type 1 or 2 diabetes
- you have chronic hypertension
- you have previously given birth to a baby who was smaller than expected
- you have a histology report which suggests that during a previous pregnancy your placenta did not function as well as it should have done
- blood taken during your combined screening test has shown that your level of pregnancy associated plasma protein-A (PAPP-A) is lower than expected

Low-dose aspirin may also be recommended if two or more of the following apply to you:

- This is your first pregnancy.
- You are aged 40 years or older.
- There are more than 10 years between this pregnancy and the birth of your last baby.
- Your BMI is 35 or more at your booking appointment.
- There is a family history of pre-eclampsia.
- This is a multiple pregnancy (for example, twins or triplets).

Your obstetrician may also advise you to take low-dose aspirin for other reasons, which they will discuss with you.

Is low-dose aspirin safe to take during pregnancy?

Low-dose aspirin is not known to be harmful to you or your baby during pregnancy. However, aspirin can affect (and be affected by) other medications, including 'over the counter' medications and herbal remedies. Please discuss any other medications you are taking with your midwife, general practitioner (GP) or obstetrician.

You should only take low-dose aspirin if your midwife or obstetrician has advised you to. It is available 'over the counter' or as a prescription (please speak to your midwife or GP if you need a prescription). When you start taking low-dose aspirin you may also have more frequent appointments or scans to assess the wellbeing of you and your baby. This will depend on your reason for taking the aspirin.

Taking low-dose aspirin does not change any of your choices for pain relief in labour. You can stop taking your low-dose aspirin when your baby is born.

Is low-dose aspirin suitable for everyone?

Low-dose aspirin is **not** suitable for everyone. Please tell your obstetrician and GP if you are allergic to aspirin (or other NSAIDs), or you have:

- any bleeding disorders such as haemophilia
- severe asthma
- chronic kidney problems
- stomach ulcers
- been previously advised not to take aspirin or other NSAIDs

Are there any side effects?

Like all medications, low-dose aspirin can cause side effects, although not everyone gets them.

Common side effects

- Mild indigestion - This is a common side effect and is known to affect more than 1 in 100 people. If you take your aspirin either with or just after food, it will be less likely to upset your stomach. Avoid taking aspirin on an empty stomach.
- Bleeding - There is no evidence to suggest low-dose aspirin causes any increase in bleeding during pregnancy or at the time of birth.

If you have any questions or concerns about taking low-dose aspirin, please speak to your obstetrician, GP or midwife.

Serious side effects

As with all medications, there is a risk that you may have an allergic reaction to low-dose aspirin. Symptoms of an allergic reaction to low-dose aspirin usually occur within an hour of taking the medication and are mild. If you experience hives (an itchy raised rash), a blocked or runny nose, please discuss your symptoms with your GP or obstetrician.

In very rare cases, it is possible to have a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to low-dose aspirin.

Call **999** for an ambulance immediately if:

- your lips, mouth, throat or tongue become swollen
- you are breathing very fast or struggling to breathe
- your throat feels tight or you are struggling to swallow
- your skin, tongue or lips are pale or have become blue or grey in colour
- you feel confused, drowsy or dizzy
- you have a rash that is swollen, raised, itchy, blistered or peeling

You may need immediate treatment in hospital.

For a full list of the side effects, please read the information leaflet included with your low-dose aspirin.

Further information

If you would like more information about taking low-dose aspirin in pregnancy, your midwife or obstetrician will be happy to answer your questions and advise you.

Useful links

www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/Medicine--pregnancy/Aspirin/

www.nhs.uk/medicines/low-dose-aspirin/

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