

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 from 12 weeks of pregnancy until your baby is born.

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 the care of pregnant women) may recommend that you take low dose aspirin if:

- you had hypertension (a heart condition caused by high blood pressure) during a previous pregnancy
- you have chronic kidney disease
- you have an auto-immune 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

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

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counter' medicines and herbal remedies. Please discuss any other medications you are taking with your midwife, 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.

Side effects

Taking low dose aspirin can cause 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. If you also take indigestion remedies, take them at least two hours before or after you take your aspirin.

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. Please read the information leaflet included with your aspirin for more information about the rarer complications.

Allergies

Please tell your obstetrician and GP if you are allergic to aspirin (or other NSAIDs), or you have severe asthma, chronic kidney problems, stomach ulcers or have been previously advised not to take aspirin or other NSAIDs.

As with any medicine, you should seek urgent medical assistance if you experience serious side effects such as wheezing, swelling of the lips, face or body, rashes or other indications of an allergic reaction.

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

Best Use of Medicines in Pregnancy website: www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/Medicine--pregnancy/Asprin/

NHS website: www.nhs.uk/medicines/low-dose-aspirin/

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