



Aspirin for preventing blood clots

This leaflet is for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adults. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

Your child should not take aspirin if they have ever had a reaction to aspirin or medicines known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, used to treat inflammation.

Name of medicine

Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid)

Brand names: Disprin, Nu-Seals aspirin

Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?

Children who have heart or kidney problems may have an increased risk of blood clots. Blood clots can be dangerous if they form in the brain, lungs or heart. Taking aspirin regularly reduces the risk of blood clots. (This is sometimes described as thinning the blood.)

Aspirin is also used to treat heart conditions to reduce the risk of blood clots. It may also be used in children who are at high risk of having a stroke, for children with Kawasaki disease and for children with inflammatory conditions.

You may have heard that aspirin should not be given to children because of the risk of a serious illness called Reye's syndrome. However, for particular groups of children, the benefits of aspirin in preventing blood clots far outweighs the risk of developing Reye's syndrome. Ask your child's health professional if you are worried about this. More information is given below.

What is aspirin available as?

Dispersible tablets: 75 mg, 300 mg

Gastroresistant tablets: 75 mg, 300 mg; these may contain lactose or aspartame

When should I give aspirin?

Aspirin is usually given **once each day**. This is usually in the morning.

Give the medicine at about the same time each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

How much should I give?

Your health professional will work out the amount of medicine (the dose) that is right for your child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

 It is important that you follow your child's health professional's instructions about how much to give.

How should I give it?



Dispersible tablets: disperse the tablet in a small amount of water (you will be told how much to use. Mix it vigorously – it will make a cloudy mixture. Give the mixture to your child straight away. You can use a medicine spoon or oral syringe.



Gastroresistant tablets should be swallowed whole with a glass of water or juice/squash. Your child should not chew the tablet.

Sometimes, to provide the correct dose of aspirin, your child's health professional may tell you to give part of a tablet, or to disperse a tablet in a small amount of water and give part of the mixture using a medicine syringe. Your child's health professional will explain what to do. This method should only be used if you have been told to do it. Any unused mixture should be poured into a paper towel and put in the bin. Do not pour it down the sink.

When should the medicine start to work?

The medicine will start to work after about 3 days although you will not see much difference in your child's symptoms.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of aspirin, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of aspirin, you do not need to give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.
- If your child is sick again, seek advice from your child's healthcare team. They will decide what to do based on your child's condition and the medicine involved.

What if I forget to give it?

If you remember before bedtime, give the missed dose. You do not need to wake up a sleeping child to give a missed dose. If you have missed more than one dose, contact your child's healthcare team for advice.

What if I think I have given too much?

If you think you may have given your child too much aspirin, contact your child's healthcare professional or local NHS services (details at end of leaflet). Have the medicine packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they cause effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Side-effects you must do something about

-  If your child is short of breath or is wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue starts to swell, or they develop a rash, they may be allergic to aspirin. Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.
-  If your child gets bad stomach pain, brings up (vomits) blood or their stools (poo) are very dark, contact your child's healthcare team or take them to hospital straight away, as they may have an ulcer.
-  If your child gets severe vomiting and symptoms of a virus, such as fever (temperature above 38°C), aches and pains, contact your child's healthcare team straight away, in case they have Reye's syndrome.

Other side-effects you need to know about

-  If your child has asthma, they may experience more asthma attacks than usual. If this happens, contact your child's healthcare team for advice.
- Your child may get stomach cramps and stomach pain when they first start taking aspirin. If this is still a problem after a week, contact your child's healthcare team. Giving each dose with some food may help

There may sometimes be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your child's healthcare team. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk

Can other medicines be given at the same time as aspirin?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol, unless your health professional has told you not to.
- Do not give your child ibuprofen or other medicines called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, unless your health professional has said that you can.
- Aspirin should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your child's health professional and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving aspirin. This includes herbal and complementary medicines.

Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?

-  Aspirin is one of a group of drugs called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). If your child has previously reacted to other drugs of this type, you should tell your doctor before starting aspirin.

You may have heard that aspirin should not be given to children because of the risk of Reye's syndrome. This is a very rare but dangerous disease that affects the brain and liver. Children affected have mostly been less than 5 years old and have had a viral illness such as chicken pox. However, it has sometimes affected older children and teenagers. If your child has a viral infection, contact your child's healthcare team for advice about whether you should stop or continue to give aspirin.

- The benefits of low-dose aspirin in reducing blood clots far outweigh the risk of your child developing Reye's syndrome.
- Higher doses of aspirin are sometimes used in a rare illness called Kawasaki disease and for rheumatic fever. If you look for information, make sure it is for the condition your child has.

General advice about medicines

- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your child's health professional but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses, as you may do harm.
- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.
- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

Where should I keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

Your healthcare team will be able to give you more information about aspirin and about other medicines used to prevent blood clots.

You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111

Tel 111 nhs.uk

Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111 nhs24.scot

Wales: NHS 111 Wales

Tel 111 111.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland: NI Direct

nidirect.gov.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk