Outstanding Care, Compassionate People, Healthier Communities

NHS Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Taking low dose aspiring during pregnancy

Why have I been advised to take aspirin?

Your midwife or doctor has recommended that you take low-dose aspirin because you have one or more factors that may increase your risk of developing:

- Pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure during pregnancy).
- Problems with the placenta.
- Having a smaller than expected baby (fetal growth restriction).

Taking low-dose aspirin can help reduce the risk of these complications and support a healthier pregnancy for both you and your baby. Women identified as being at moderate or high risk of pre-eclampsia are advised to take aspirin from 12 weeks of pregnancy onwards.

📌 Quick reference

Dose: 150 mg once daily (usually two 75 mg tablets).
Start: From 12 weeks of pregnancy.
Take: In the evenin.g
Continue: Until advised by your maternity team.
Purpose: To reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia and support healthy placental function.

What is pre-eclampsia?

Pre-eclampsia is a condition that usually develops after 20 weeks of pregnancy. It can affect both the pregnant person and their baby.

Symptoms can include:

⚠️ Severe headaches.
⚠️ Blurred vision or flashing lights.
⚠️ Pain below the ribs.
⚠️ Sudden swelling of the face, hands or feet.
⚠️ High blood pressure.
⚠️ Feeling generally unwell.

If left untreated, pre-eclampsia can become serious for both parent and baby.

How does aspirin help?

Low-dose aspirin helps improve blood flow to the placenta. This may:

✅ Reduce the chance of developing pre-eclampsia.
✅ Reduce the risk of your baby growing more slowly than expected.
✅ Improve placental function.
✅ Support a healthier pregnancy.

How should I take my aspirin?

Take 150 mg aspirin once each day. This is usually t**wo 75 mg tablets taken together once daily.**

Women identified as being at increased risk are advised to take aspirin from 12 weeks of pregnancy.

When should I start?

Begin taking aspirin from **12 weeks of pregnancy**, or when advised by your maternity team.

When should I stop?

Continue taking aspirin until advised by your maternity team. In most cases this will be until the birth of your baby.

When should I take it?

Research suggests aspirin works best when taken in the evening. Try to take it at the same time every day.

How should I take it?

- Swallow the tablets with water.
- Take with food if you experience indigestion.
- Do not exceed the dose recommended by your maternity team.

💡 **Remember**

Taking your aspirin every day as prescribed gives you the greatest benefit. Missing occasional doses is unlikely to be harmful, but regular use is important to help reduce the risk of pregnancy complications.

What if I forget a dose?

If you forget to take your aspirin:

✓ Take it when you remember on the same day.

✓ If it is nearly time for your next dose, skip the missed dose.

✓ Take your next dose at the usual time.

❌ Do not take a double dose.

Is aspirin safe during pregnancy?

Yes. Low-dose aspirin has been used safely during pregnancy for many years and is recommended for women and birthing people who are at increased risk of pre-eclampsia. The dose prescribed in pregnancy is much lower than the doses commonly used for pain relief.

Are there any side effects?

Most people take low-dose aspirin without any problems. Possible side effects include:

- Mild indigestion.
- Heartburn.
- Mild stomach discomfort.
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If side effects become troublesome, speak to your midwife, GP or obstetrician.

Who should not take aspirin?

Please tell your maternity team if you:

- Are allergic to aspirin.
- Have a history of stomach ulcers.
- Have a bleeding disorder.
- Take blood-thinning medication.
- Have asthma that is made worse by aspirin.

⚠️ Important

Do not stop taking your 150 mg aspirin unless advised by your midwife, obstetrician or GP. Stopping treatment early may reduce the protective benefits against pre-eclampsia and placental complications.

Always tell any healthcare professional involved in your care that you are taking aspirin during pregnancy.

When should I seek urgent advice?

Contact the Maternity Triage Advice Line immediately if you experience:

- 🚨 Severe or persistent headache.
- 🚨 Blurred vision, flashing lights or visual disturbances.
- 🚨 Severe swelling of the face, hands or feet.
- 🚨 Severe pain below your ribs.
- 🚨 Vaginal bleeding.
- 🚨 Reduced fetal movements.
- 🚨 Sudden shortness of breath.
- 🚨 Any symptoms of pre-eclampsia.
- 🚨 Any concerns about your pregnancy.

🆘 Do not wait

If you are worried about yourself or your baby, seek advice immediately. **Do not wait until your next appointment.**

Frequently asked questions

Will aspirin harm my baby?
No. Low-dose aspirin is widely used in pregnancy and is considered safe when taken as prescribed.

Can I take paracetamol as well?
Yes. Paracetamol can usually be taken alongside low-dose aspirin. Follow the advice given by your healthcare professional.

Will I still be able to have an epidural?
In most cases, yes. Your maternity team will advise you if there are any special considerations.

Can my GP prescribe aspirin?
Yes. SFH guidance notes that GPs can prescribe aspirin when clinically indicated.

Need help or advice?

Your community midwife should be your first point of contact for routine pregnancy advice and questions about taking aspirin.

Maternity Triage Advice Line

☎ **01623 676170**

Contact Maternity Triage if you have concerns about:

- Reduced fetal movements.
- Vaginal bleeding.
- Severe headache.
- Visual disturbances.
- Signs of pre-eclampsia.
- Severe abdominal pain.
- Your wellbeing or your baby's wellbeing.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222
Newark Hospital: 01636 685692
Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

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