

Can an aspirin a day prevent a heart attack or stroke?

Taking an aspirin daily can help prevent a heart attack or stroke in some people, but not in everyone. It also can cause unwanted side effects.

You should use daily aspirin therapy only after first talking to your doctor, who can weigh the benefits and risks.

For people aged 40 to 59 years who have experienced a heart attack, stroke, have heart or blood vessel disease, or who have a greater than 10% risk for a cardiovascular event may benefit from a daily dose of aspirin (81 mg or “baby aspirin”).

Aspirin is not recommended as a primary preventive medication by people who have not had a heart attack, stroke, cardiovascular problems, or if your calculated risk for a cardiovascular event is NOT greater than 10%. In such people, the benefit has not been established but risks—such as dangerous bleeding into the brain or stomach—are still present.

If your doctor recommends daily aspirin to lower the risk of a heart attack and clot-related stroke, discuss possible drug interactions that may occur with long-term aspirin use, including with over-the-counter pain relievers.

