



# **Taking Low Dose Aspirin in Pregnancy**



**Northampton  
General Hospital**  
NHS Trust



## Introduction

You have been given this leaflet as your obstetrician/midwife feels that you will benefit from taking low dose aspirin (150mg once a day) from 12 weeks to 36 weeks of your pregnancy. This medication has the greatest benefit when started between 12-16 weeks of pregnancy.

## What is aspirin?

Aspirin belongs to the NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory) family of medications. In pregnancy it can improve the blood flow to, and function of your placenta; this in turn helps to provide your baby with the oxygen and nutrients needed for development. It can reduce your chances of developing high blood pressure and other related pregnancy complications.

## Why should I take aspirin?

Aspirin is not always required in pregnancy. You have been advised to take aspirin to reduce the chances of:

- Developing high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure & protein in your urine)
- Having your baby prematurely (before 37 weeks)
- Your baby being smaller than expected

You will have been advised to start aspirin if one of the following apply to you:

- You have had high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia during a previous pregnancy

- You already suffer from high blood pressure outside of pregnancy
- You have chronic kidney disease
- You have an auto-immune condition such as lupus or antiphospholipid syndrome
- You have Type 1 or 2 diabetes
- You have previously given birth to a baby who was smaller than expected
- You have a low Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein (PAPP-A) screening blood test

Otherwise, you will have been advised to start aspirin if two or more of the following apply to you:

- This is your first pregnancy
- You are aged 40 years or older
- There has been more than 10 years between your current pregnancy and your previous pregnancy
- You have a BMI of 35kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more at your first visit
- You have a family history of pre-eclampsia
- This is a multiple pregnancy (e.g. twins, triplets)
- You were smoking when you discovered you were pregnant

## How do I take aspirin & is it safe for me and my baby?

You have been given Aspirin 75mg dispersible tablets from the hospital. You should take 2 tablets (150mg) once a day, with or after your evening meal. Tablets can be swallowed whole or dispersed in a small amount of water to take.

Aspirin should be continued from 12 weeks to 36 weeks of your pregnancy. If you think you may be in labour, please stop your aspirin until this is confirmed. Low dose aspirin has not been found to cause any harm to the unborn baby or to increase the chance of heavy bleeding at birth.

Aspirin can interact with some other medications and herbal tablets, so it is important that you tell your obstetrician/midwife about any other medications you are taking.

Some people can find that low dose aspirin causes mild stomach irritation, heartburn & indigestion – this is why it is important to take it with or after food. The Patient Information leaflet provided inside the boxes of tablets gives further information – please do have a read and contact your obstetrician/midwife/GP if you have any further concerns.

## Allergies or other medical conditions

Please alert your obstetrician, GP or midwife before taking aspirin if you have/ have had any of the following:

- A known allergy to aspirin (or any other NSAIDs)
- Severe asthma or asthma that has worsened with a previous intake of aspirin or other NSAIDs
- Stomach / intestinal ulcers
- A bleeding or blood-clotting disorder
- Gout
- Liver or kidney disease
- G6PD deficiency
- A sugar intolerance

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.

## What else can I do?

- If you smoke, it is very important to try to stop, as smoking can reduce the function of your placenta and the blood flow to your baby. Please contact your community midwife who can refer you to the smoking cessation team for support

- Try to maintain a healthy weight, diet and lifestyle – please speak with your midwife/obstetrician for further advice

## Useful websites

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk](http://www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk)

## Other information

Northampton General Hospital operates a smoke-free policy. This means that smoking is not allowed anywhere on the Trust site, this includes all buildings, grounds and car parks.

Leaflets, information, advice and support on giving up smoking and on nicotine replacement therapy are available from the local Stop Smoking helpline on 0845 6013116, the free national helpline on 0300 123 1044, email: [smokefree@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:smokefree@northnorthants.gov.uk) and pharmacies.

Car parking at Northampton General Hospital is extremely limited and it is essential to arrive early, allowing ample time for parking. You may find it more convenient to be dropped off and collected.

This information can be provided in other languages and formats upon request including Braille, audio cassette and CD. Please contact (01604) 523442 or the Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) on (01604) 545784, email: [ngh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ngh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

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[www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk](http://www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk)

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