

Aspirin

Aspirin is a medicine used to decrease pain, fever or swelling (inflammation). It may also help thin the blood and slow down how fast it clots.

Store brand, generic or name brand aspirin is equally good. Generic or store brands often cost less.

WARNING: Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers without checking with your child's doctor first.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has found a link between the use of aspirin in children who have the flu or chickenpox and Reye's syndrome, a serious (and sometimes fatal) illness.

The symptoms of **Reye's Syndrome** are:

- Vomiting (throwing up)
- Convulsions (seizures)
- Sleepiness

If your child has these symptoms, get medical help immediately.

How to give this medicine

- Read the label carefully. Make sure you are giving your child the right dose that the doctor has ordered.
- Stay with your child until he or she has swallowed the dose of medicine.
- Ask your pharmacist, nurse or doctor before crushing any medicine.
- Chewable tablets may be chewed, dissolved in liquid or swallowed whole.
- Always give aspirin with food. If the stomach is empty, aspirin can cause nausea, upset stomach, vomiting or stomach bleeding.
- If taking aspirin to prevent blood clots, take the same amount at the same time every day. Never stop or change the amount given without first talking to your child's doctor or pharmacist.



Picture 1 Always take aspirin with food or milk.

If you forget to give a dose

If you forget to give a dose of aspirin, give it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for the next dose, do not give the missed dose at all. Do not double the next dose. Instead, go back to your regular dosing schedule. If you have any questions about this, check with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

If a dose is vomited

Even if the medicine is vomited right after it is given, some of the medicine may still be in the stomach. Do not repeat the dose unless you can see that the whole tablet was vomited.

If vomiting occurs again with future doses, call your child's doctor before you give more medicine.

Medicine storage

Store aspirin and all medicine out of the reach of children.

Do:

- Always keep medicine in the original bottle from the pharmacy.
- Keep the bottle tightly closed and store it in a dark, dry place (not in the bathroom or above the kitchen sink). Light and moisture make aspirin not work as well.
- Store it at room temperature.

Do not:

- Keep in the refrigerator.
- Use after the expiration date printed on the label.
- Use if you notice a vinegar-like odor when you open the bottle or the pill has changed color or looks different.
- Flush medicine down the toilet. When the medicine is no longer needed, mix the leftover medicine with coffee grounds or kitty litter and place the mixture into a container that will not leak. Throw the container away in the trash where no one can reach it.

Drug interactions

Read the labels of all medicines, including over-the-counter drugs, carefully. If your child is taking any medicine or supplements, tell your doctor and pharmacist. Aspirin should not be taken with these medicines or products:

- ACE-inhibitors for blood pressure (drugs that end in “pril”)
- Blood thinners like warfarin (Coumadin®) and heparin
- Steroids

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Drug interactions, continued

- Ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®), naproxen (Aleve®) and other NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)
- Cough, cold and pain medicines taken by mouth or put on the skin that contain aspirin or NSAIDs
- Herbal supplements with ginkgo biloba, alfalfa and anise.
- Do not give over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), aspirin, antacids or cold medicines without checking with your child's doctor or pharmacist first.

Warning

If your child is allergic to aspirin, he or she **should not** take this medicine. He may not be able to take aspirin if he is allergic to ibuprofen or naproxen.

Special note for female patients

- If a patient thinks she might be pregnant, she should tell the doctor before taking this or any medicine. Some medicines may cause problems such as miscarriage, deformities, or hurt the baby's heart and lungs if taken during pregnancy.
- If a patient is breast-feeding, she should tell her doctor before taking aspirin or any medicine. Some medicines can pass into breast milk and cause side effects in the baby.

Possible side effects

The most common side effects are:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain

When to call the doctor

Call your doctor or the clinic if any of the following occur with your child:

- Ringing in the ears or problems hearing
- Dizziness or confusion
- Bruising, including small pinpoint or freckle-sized spots
- Bleeding problems like getting a cut to stop bleeding, nosebleeds, bleeding gums, blood in the stool or urine, black stools or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- Unusual tiredness or weakness
- Skin rash or rash that itches
- Exposure to chicken pox or shingles
- Any side effects that continue or are very bothersome

When to call for emergency help

Call for emergency help if your child has any of these signs of an allergic reaction:

- Trouble breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling of hands, feet or ankles

Safety tips

- All children, especially those on long term aspirin therapy, should get a flu vaccine every year.
- Tell your child's doctor and pharmacist if your child has a strange or allergic reaction to any medicine.
- If you carry medicine in your purse, keep it in its childproof bottle and keep your purse out of the reach of children.
- Bring all your child's medicines with you **in the original bottles** when your child sees a doctor, goes to an emergency room or is admitted to the hospital. This helps doctors who may not know your child.
- Learn the name, spelling and dose of medicine your child takes. Also, teach him if he is old enough. You will need to know this information when you call your child's doctor or pharmacist.
- **If your child takes too much of any medicine or someone takes medicine that is not theirs, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 (TDD 614-228-2272).** They will tell you what to do.
- Tell your child's teacher, school nurse, coach, babysitter and others that your child is taking this medicine and what side effects to watch for.
- For more help giving medicines, see Helping Hand HH-IV-28, *Medications: How to Give by Mouth*.

Follow-up visits

- If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- Your child's next doctor's visit is on (date) _____ at _____ (time)
_____ (location), with _____
- You can expect to have regular follow-up visits with your child's doctor.
- Write down all your questions as you think of them. Take this list with you when you see the doctor.
- Be sure to call your doctor if you cannot keep the appointment.