

## Aspirin

Aspirin is a common medicine used to reduce aches and pain, fever, and swelling (inflammation). It's also used to prevent blood clots by thinning out the blood. People with a high risk of blood clots, strokes, and heart attacks can take small doses of aspirin long-term to reduce these risks.

Aspirin is sold over-the-counter (OTC). It can be store brand, generic, or name brand. They all work the same. Generic or store brands usually cost less.

### Warning

- If your child is allergic to aspirin, they **should not** take it. They may not be able to take aspirin if they're allergic to ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®).
- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) warns against children with the flu or chickenpox to avoid taking aspirin. It can increase their risk for Reye's syndrome, which is a dangerous illness that causes swelling in the liver and brain.

**If your child has these symptoms, call 911 or go to Urgent Care:**

- Throwing up (vomiting)
- Seizures (convulsions)
- Sleepiness

### How to Give This Medicine

- Read the label carefully. Make sure you're giving your child the right dose. Give aspirin exactly as their doctor or health care provider said.
- Stay with your child until they have swallowed the full dose of medicine.
- Ask the pharmacist, doctor, or health care provider before crushing any medicine.
- Chewable tablets may be chewed, dissolved in liquid, or swallowed whole.

- Always give aspirin with food. If given on an empty stomach, aspirin can cause nausea, upset stomach, vomiting, or stomach bleeding (Picture 1).
- If your child is taking aspirin to prevent blood clots, give them the same amount at the same time each day. Do not stop or change the amount without talking to their doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist.



**Picture 1** Eating before taking aspirin can help prevent an upset stomach.

## If You Forget a Dose

- If you forget to give a dose of aspirin, give it as soon as possible. If it's 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, ask your child's doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist.

## If a Dose is Vomited

If the medicine is vomited right after it is given, some of it may still be in your child's stomach. Do not repeat the dose unless you can see that the whole tablet came up. If vomiting happens with future doses, call your child's doctor or health care provider before giving them more.

## Drug Interactions

- Tell your child's doctor or health care provider about any prescribed or over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, or herbal supplements they take. Ask if it's safe to take these with aspirin. **Do not give your child the following while taking aspirin:**
  - Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Aleve), and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
  - Cough, cold, and pain medicines taken by mouth or put on the skin that contain aspirin, like Triaminic<sup>®</sup>, Robitussin<sup>®</sup>, Vicks 44<sup>®</sup>, or Nyquil<sup>®</sup>.
  - Herbal supplements with ginkgo biloba, alfalfa, and anise.
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>®</sup>), antacids, or cold medicines.
- Ask your child's doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist if they can safely take:
  - ACE inhibitors for blood pressure (drugs that end in "pril").
  - Blood thinners, like warfarin (Coumadin<sup>®</sup>), heparin, and enoxaparin (Lovenox<sup>®</sup>).

## **Special Note About Pregnancy**

- If a patient thinks they might be pregnant, they must tell the doctor or health care provider before starting this or any medicine.
- If a patient is breast/chest feeding, they must tell the doctor or health care provider before starting this or any medicine. This medicine can pass through 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 child's doctor or health care provider if they have:

- Ringing in the ears or problems hearing.
- Dizziness or confusion.
- Bruising, including small or freckle-sized spots.
- Bleeding problems, like a cut won't stop bleeding, nosebleeds, bleeding gums, or blood in the stool or urine.
- Black poop (stool).
- Vomit that looks like coffee grounds.
- Unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Skin rash or rash that itches.
- Been exposed to chicken pox or shingles.
- Any side effects that continue or become a problem.

## **When to Call 911**

Call 911 for emergency help if your child shows signs of an allergic reaction, like:

- Trouble breathing
- Swelling of the mouth, face, hands, feet, or ankles

## Medicine Storage

- Store all aspirin out of the reach of children and pets.
- Always keep medicine in the original bottle.
- Keep aspirin tightly closed and store it in a dark, dry place.
- Do not keep this medicine in the refrigerator.
- Do not use this medicine after the expiration date printed on the label.
- Do not use if you notice a vinegar-like smell when you open the bottle, or the pill has changed color or looks different.
- When the medicine is no longer needed, mix what's leftover with coffee grounds or kitty litter. Place the mixture in a container that will not leak. Throw it away in the trash where no one can reach it. **DO NOT flush it down the toilet.**

## Medicine Safety

- Never share medicine with others.
- Learn the name, spelling, and dose of this medicine.
- Tell the pharmacist if you notice anything different about your medicine.
- Some pharmacies may not have this medicine. Call your pharmacy to see if they have or can get this medicine. You may also fill the prescription at the Nationwide Children's Hospital Pharmacy. The nurse can help you with this.
- Bring all medicines with you in their original bottles when you go to the doctor, an emergency room, or the hospital.
- Always keep a current list of your child's medicines with you. It should include prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, herbal and natural products, and supplements.
- Tell your child's doctor, health care provider, and pharmacist if they have a strange or allergic reaction to any medicine.
- If your child takes too much of this medicine or if someone else takes it, call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 1 (800) 222-1222 [TTY (614) 228-2272]. They will tell you what to do.
- For children, tell their teacher, school nurse, coach, babysitter, and others who work closely with them what side effects to watch for.