

❑ FACT: Once your doctor decides that daily use of aspirin is for you, safe use depends on following your doctor's directions

There are no directions on the label for using aspirin to reduce the risk of heart attack or clot-related stroke. You must rely on your health professional to provide the correct information on dose and directions for use. Using aspirin correctly gives you the best chance of getting the greatest benefits with the fewest unwanted side effects. Discuss with your health professional the different forms of aspirin products that might be best suited for you.

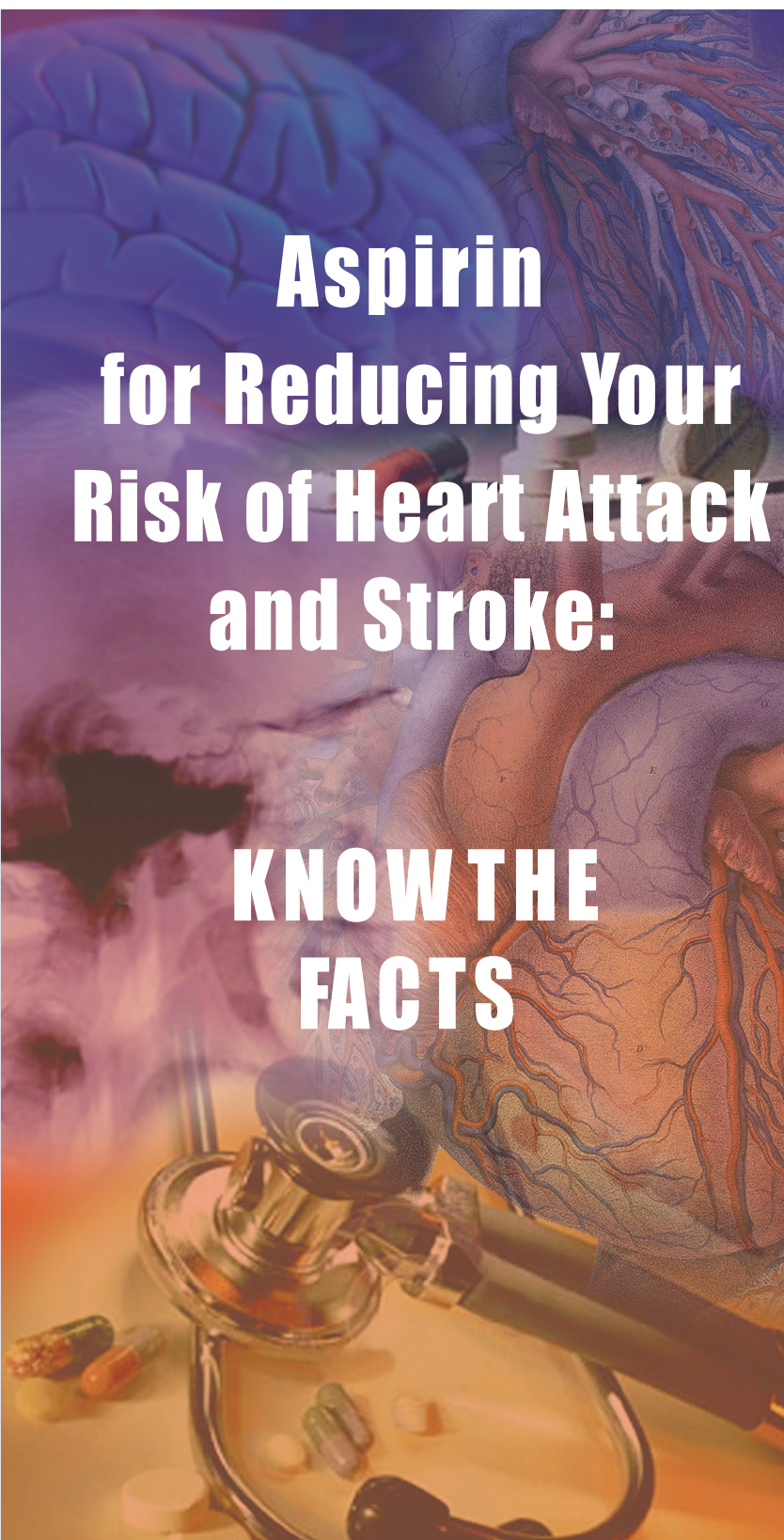
Aspirin has been shown to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke in patients who have cardiovascular disease or who have already had a heart attack or stroke, but not all over-the-counter pain and fever reducers do that. Even though the directions on the aspirin label do not apply to this use of aspirin, you still need to read the label to confirm that the product you buy and use contains aspirin at the correct dose. Check the *Drug Facts* label for "active ingredients: aspirin" or "acetylsalicylic acid" at the dose that your health professional has prescribed.

Remember, if you are using aspirin everyday for weeks, months or years to prevent a heart attack, stroke, or for any use not listed on the label - without guidance from your health professional - you could be doing your body more harm than good.

Go to www.fda.gov or call toll-free 1-888-INFO-FDA



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Food and Drug Administration**



You can walk into any pharmacy, grocery or convenience store and buy aspirin without a prescription. The *Drug Facts* label on medication products, will help you choose aspirin for relieving headache, pain, swelling, or fever. The *Drug Facts* label also gives directions that will help you use the aspirin so that it is safe and effective.

But what about using aspirin for a different use, time period, or in a manner that is not listed on the label? For example, using aspirin to lower the risk of heart attack and clot-related strokes. In these cases, the labeling information is not there to help you with how to choose and how to use the medicine safely. **Since you don't have the labeling directions to help you, you need the medical knowledge of your doctor, nurse practitioner or other health professional.**

You can increase the chance of getting the good effects and decrease the chance of getting the bad effects of any medicine by choosing and using it wisely. When it comes to using aspirin to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke, *choosing* and *using* wisely means:

**Know the facts
and
Work with your health professional**



❑ **FACT: Daily use of aspirin is not right for everyone.**

Aspirin has been shown to be helpful when used daily to lower the risk of heart attack, clot-related strokes and other blood flow problems in patients who have cardiovascular disease or who have already had a heart attack or stroke. Many medical professionals prescribe aspirin for these uses. There may be a benefit in daily aspirin use for you if you have some kind of heart or blood vessel disease, or if you have evidence of poor blood flow to the brain. However, the risks of long-term aspirin use may be greater than the benefits if there are no signs of, or risk factors for heart or blood vessel disease.

Every prescription and over-the-counter medicine, has benefits and risks--even such a common and familiar medicine as aspirin. Aspirin use can result in serious side effects, such as stomach bleeding, bleeding in the brain, kidney failure, and some kinds of strokes. No medicine is completely safe. By carefully reviewing many different factors, your health professional can help you make the best choice for you.

When you don't have the labeling directions to guide you, you need the medical knowledge of your doctor, nurse practitioner or other health professional.

❑ **FACT: Daily aspirin can be safest when prescribed by a medical health professional**

Before deciding if daily aspirin use is right for you, your health professional will need to consider:

- Your medical history and the history of your family members
- Your use of other medicines, including prescription and over-the-counter
- Your use of other products, such as dietary supplements, including vitamins and herbals
- Your allergies or sensitivities, and anything that affects your ability to use the medicine
- What you have to gain, or the benefits, from the use of the medicine
- Other options and their risks and benefits
- What side effects you may experience
- What dose, and what directions for use are best for you
- How to know when the medicine is working or not working for this use

Make sure to tell your health professional all the medicines (prescription and over-the-counter) and dietary supplements, including vitamins and herbals, that you use--even if only occasionally.

❑ **FACT: Aspirin is a drug**

If you are at risk for heart attack or stroke your doctor may prescribe aspirin to increase blood flow to the heart and brain. But any drug--including aspirin--can have harmful side effects, especially when mixed with other products. In fact, the chance of side effects increases with each new product you use.

New products includes prescription and other over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements, (including vitamins and herbals), and sometimes foods and beverages. For instance, people who already use a prescribed medication to thin the blood should not use aspirin unless recommended by a health professional. There are also dietary supplements known to thin the blood. Using aspirin with alcohol or with another product that also contains aspirin, such as a cough-cold-sinus drug, can increase the chance of side effects.

Your health professional will consider your current state of health. Some medical conditions, such as pregnancy, uncontrolled high blood pressure, bleeding disorders, asthma, peptic (stomach) ulcers, liver and kidney disease, could make aspirin a bad choice for you.

Make sure that all your health professionals are aware that you are using aspirin to reduce your risk of heart attack and clot-related strokes.