

# Aspirin in pregnancy

## Maternity Services

### Information for Patients

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## Introduction

In pregnancy, some people are at higher risk of having problems with their placenta (also called the afterbirth). This can be because of pre-eclampsia or problems with the baby's growth.

Taking low dose aspirin (150mg) can help with this. Research shows that aspirin can help reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia. The risk of your baby being born early is also reduced by 1 in 10.

You will take **2 tablets a day** (better to take at night). This is from the 12th week of your pregnancy until 36 weeks of pregnancy. This dose of aspirin is safe to take.

## What is pre-eclampsia?

Pre-eclampsia is a health problem that some pregnant women and pregnant people get. The effects can be mild or severe. It causes:

- high blood pressure
- protein from your kidney leaking into your pee
- changes in your blood test which tells us about your kidney's health
- liver and blood clotting problems
- can effect the growth of your baby

In serious cases it can make you have a fit or seizure (eclampsia).

### You might have pre-eclampsia if you:

- have bad headaches

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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- have problems with eyesight, blurring or flashing lights in the eyes
- have bad pain just under the ribs
- being sick (vomiting)
- have **sudden** swelling of the hands, feet or face

## Your baby's growth

Your baby can be small (fetal growth restriction) if you:

- had a small baby in a past pregnancy
- have low pregnancy associated plasma protein A (PAPP-A)

Taking aspirin can help stop this. We will talk to you about this at your first scan appointment.

## Should I take aspirin in pregnancy?

A midwife, GP or obstetrician will see you in early pregnancy. They will tell you if you need to take aspirin.

You are at **high risk** of developing pre-eclampsia if you have **1** of these:

- high blood pressure in a past pregnancy (you took medicine for this)
- long lasting kidney disease
- type 1 or type 2 diabetes
- you have an autoimmune disorder (like systemic lupus erythematosus or antiphospholipid syndrome)
- if you take medicine for high blood pressure. This can be from before or the beginning of your pregnancy.
- if you have had a baby that was small. Small means less than the 10th centile on your own grow chart.
- if your past pregnancy showed placental problems

You are at a **moderate risk** of developing pre-eclampsia if you have more than **1** of these:

- if it is your first on going pregnancy
- you are aged over 40
- there is more than a 10 year gap between pregnancies
- you have a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or more
- you have a family history (mother or sister) who have had pre-eclampsia
- you have a multiple (twin/ triplet) pregnancy

## Is it safe to take aspirin?

**There are some conditions where taking aspirin is not safe. You should not take aspirin:**

- when you have stomach ulcers
- when you have a known allergy or very sensitive to aspirin
- when you have asthma and are very sensitive to aspirin. Stop taking aspirin if it makes your asthma worse. Get advice from your GP straight away.
- if you have kidney or liver problems. The doctor can give a lower dose of aspirin.

Talk with your midwife, GP or hospital doctor if you are not sure about taking aspirin.

## How can I get aspirin?

Your midwife will give you a letter. Take this letter to your GP so they can give you a prescription. You should take aspirin until 36 weeks of your pregnancy.

If you need more aspirin you can get a prescription from your GP. You can also buy it directly from your pharmacist over the counter.

## Useful contacts

**Specialist hypertension midwife contact numbers:**

07833 611 697 / 07966 558 325

## More information

**Action on pre-eclampsia:** 80B High Street, Evesham, Worcester WR11 4EU

Tel: 01386 761 848 / Website: [www.apec.org.uk](http://www.apec.org.uk) / Email: [info@apec.org.uk](mailto:info@apec.org.uk)

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