



Aspirin: Information for families

This information sheet describes aspirin, how it is given and some of its possible side effects. Each person reacts differently to medicines so your child will not necessarily suffer every side effect mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or telephone one of the contact numbers on this information sheet.

What is it for?

Aspirin is a medicine commonly used to relieve pain, reduce swelling and reduce a high temperature. It also makes the blood less sticky so it is less likely to form a clot. In adults, aspirin is often given to people with heart problems because of this action.

Aspirin should not be given to children aged under 16 unless on the advice of a doctor. This is because there is a very small risk that children can develop a condition called Reye's syndrome if they are given aspirin when they have a viral illness. In many cases, your doctor will advise that your child takes aspirin despite this risk, because the chance of developing a blood clot is greater than the risk of developing Reye's syndrome.

If your child needs a proportion of the tablet, you might need to cut/crush and disperse it in a specific volume of water, then draw up the correct dose using the oral syringe provided. These instructions will be on the medicine label.

What are the side effects?

Side effects are rare, but occasionally can include:

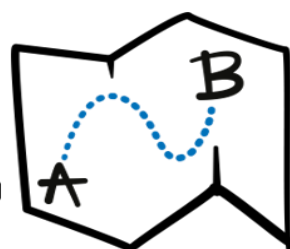
- Bleeding or bruising – you may notice that your child tends to bleed or bruise more easily than previously. This is due to the anti-clotting property of aspirin.
- Skin rash – this may indicate an allergy, contact your child's doctor.
- Bronchospasm, shortness of breath or wheezing – if this becomes worse after your child starts taking aspirin, please tell us.
- Stomach ache or ulcer – aspirin can irritate the lining of the stomach. This can be helped by always taking the dose after food. If your child has serious stomach pains, vomits blood or has very dark stools then please tell us.

If you are concerned about any of these side effects, please discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

How is it given?

Aspirin is available in many forms, but we usually use the 75mg dispersible tablets.

The dose should be taken once a day after food. Disperse the tablet(s) in a small amount of water and give it to your child to drink or use an oral syringe to squirt the dose gently into the side of your child's mouth.



Who should not take aspirin (contraindications)?

People with the following conditions should discuss taking aspirin with their doctor:

- Pregnancy or potential pregnancy, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding
- Allergy to aspirin or its ingredients, salicylates or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- Stomach problems, especially a history of gastro-intestinal bleeding
- Previous history of stomach ulcers
- Clotting disorder
- Asthma
- G6PD deficiency: high dose aspirin

Aspirin and other medicines

Some medicines can react with aspirin, making their effects stronger or weaker. **Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any other medicines, including herbal or complementary medicines.**

The following are known to interact with aspirin, but can be safely given with low antiplatelet doses of aspirin:

- Anticoagulant medicines to prevent blood clots forming

For further information please contact:

Medicines Information: 020 7829 8608 or via the Medications page on the MyGOSH app (available Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)

Cardiology team via GOSH switchboard: 020 7405 9200 or via the MyGOSH app

Disclaimer

Please read this information sheet from GOSH alongside the patient information leaflet (PIL) provided by the manufacturer. If you do not have a copy of the manufacturer's patient information leaflet please talk to your pharmacist. A few products do not have a marketing authorisation (licence) as a medicine and therefore there is no PIL. For children in particular, there may be conflicts of information between the manufacturer's patient information leaflet (PIL) and guidance provided by GOSH and other healthcare providers. For example, some manufacturers may recommend, in the patient information leaflet, that a medicine is not given to children aged under 12 years. In most cases, this is because the manufacturer will recruit adults to clinical trials in the first instance and therefore the initial marketing authorisation (licence) only covers adults and older children. For new medicines, the manufacturer then has to recruit children and newborns into trials (unless the medicine is not going to be used in children and newborns) and subsequently amend the PIL with the approved information. Older medicines may have been used effectively for many years in children without problems but the manufacturer has not been required to collect data and amend the licence. This does not mean that it is unsafe for children and young people to be prescribed such a medicine 'off-licence/off-label'. However, if you are concerned about any conflicts of information, please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

- Diuretic tablets to reduce fluid in the body
- Other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) medicines, such as ibuprofen
- Some anti-epileptic medicines
- ACE inhibitors
- If your child is taking aspirin regularly, they **can** also take paracetamol to reduce pain and high temperatures when needed.

Important

- Keep medicines in a safe place where children cannot reach them.
- Keep medicines in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight and away from heat.
- If your doctor decides to stop treatment with aspirin, return any unused medicine to the pharmacist. Do not flush down the toilet or throw it away.
- If you forget to give your child a dose, give it as soon as you remember. Do not give a double dose if it is already time to give the next one.
- If your child vomits after taking the medicine, do not give a double dose.
- Your family doctor (GP) will need to give you a repeat prescription for aspirin; ask your GP for another prescription with enough time (when you have about 2 weeks left of medicine) to make sure you do not run out.

