

Aspirin May Do More Harm than Good

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Millions of people take a daily dose of aspirin to act as “insurance” against health problems. But an article published in *Alimentary and Pharmacology Therapeutics* October 14, 2005 calls on doctors to think twice about giving aspirin to people who otherwise appear healthy. The reason being is that aspirin use even at “low dose” can result in internal bleeding of the stomach. Low dose aspirin for prevention of cardiovascular events may account for more than 30% of all major gastrointestinal hemorrhage in patients over 15 years of age and may also be associated with an increased risk of renal failure. Ulcers are found in one in 10 patients taking low-dose aspirin. Most of these do not exhibit symptoms.

What are you to do? On the flip side, low-dose aspirin is *said* to be beneficial for warding off a second heart attack or stroke in those people with obvious cardiovascular disease. But is it? The research is showing that aspirin seems to be much more effective in reducing the chances of non-fatal events than in reducing death. Indeed, among large long-term trials after a person has a heart attack **there is no evidence that aspirin saves lives**. It may prevent future mild heart attacks (which would not have resulted in death anyway) but it doesn't prevent deadly heart attacks.

The failure of aspirin to reduce mortality despite a reduction in non-fatal events in many studies suggests that aspirin may hide or conceal, rather than prevent, vascular events. Epidemiological data suggest that 25% of non-fatal myocardial infarctions are silent...you have virtually no symptoms. Aspirin, even at low doses, is a pain reducer and it may cause upset stomach or indigestion. So if one is taking daily low dose aspirin that person may not feel the pain of a mild heart attack due to the pain reducing effects of aspirin or may think the pain is from indigestion.

Not convinced yet? **Aspirin increased the risk of sudden death in every long-term study after myocardial infarction that reported such events.**

This increase was from 4.4% on placebo to 5.6% on aspirin in the PARIS study; from 2.0% to 2.7% in the Aspirin Myocardial Infarction study (AMIS); and from 2.0% to 2.4% in the PARIS-II study. This could reflect an increased risk of sudden death among concealed, and therefore untreated, events. Another possible mechanism by which aspirin may convert non-fatal events into fatal ones is by increasing the risk of hemorrhage.

The reality is that “while aspirin used for primary prevention may reduce the risk of nonfatal ischemic events, these benefits are offset by higher bleeding, leaving no net effect on vascular mortality”. *Lancet* 2009; 373:1849-1860.

Hope is not lost. There are many preventive lifestyle habits that are under your control that have been proven to benefit heart health. Read on to find out some of the most important changes you can make to be heart healthy!



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Triglycerides and Heart Health

Research is showing that triglyceride levels are as or more important than cholesterol levels when it comes to heart disease. High triglycerides alone increased the risk of heart attack nearly three-fold. Triglyceride levels are directly influenced by what you eat. Anything that raises your blood glucose will raise triglycerides as well.

Avoidance of sugars and other refined carbohydrates are important in reducing blood glucose and triglyceride levels. Don't forget exercise! Exercise is the way you "burn off" the glucose and triglycerides!

Anemia's Influence on Heart Health

Anemia occurs when your body has a below-normal level of hemoglobin, which in turn prevents your body from getting enough oxygen. This lower level of oxygen causes your heart to work harder. These effects on your heart can make you 41% more susceptible to heart disease or worsen existing heart disease. The death rate is especially high in anemic people with heart failure who also have kidney disease and/or diabetes. There are many types of anemia. Getting a CBC, Serum Iron and Ferritin performed can help guide the treatment for anemias. B12 and Folic acid supplementation may be of benefit but there could be more underlying issues causing the anemia.

Reduce Inflammation for Heart Protection

Reducing inflammation helps decrease cholesterol and the tendency to form blood clots. In the case of atherosclerosis, the inflammation process in blood vessels and the kidney can lead to a build-up of cells and damage to tissues that can constrict the passage of blood through vessels. Be sure to review our June 2010 Issue on *Inflammation* to find out what you can do reduce inflammation related to heart disease.

Important Nutrients for the Heart

(General dosages for 150lb adult)

1. Supplements are not a replacement for a healthy diet! However, they can serve to enhance the quality or nutrient density of your diet.
2. **CoQ10:** found in highest concentrations in heart tissue. Helps overall heart strength and stability. 300mg per day of Ubiquinone or 100mg per day of Ubiquinol. Review our May 2009 Issue for more data on CoQ10.
3. **Vitamin K2:** can reduce arterial calcifications by 50%, decrease the risk of cardiovascular death by 50%. Read our April 2010 Issue for more information.
4. **Vitamin E:** powerful antioxidant especially valuable to those with high platelets and increased inflammation. 400IU of mixed tocopherols per day.
5. **Fish Oil:** protects heart function and helps reduce inflammation. 500-1000mg per day
6. **B12 and Folic Acid:** helps with homocysteine removal, iron metabolism and reduced anemia. B12: 3000mcg per day; Folic Acid: 1200mcg per day
7. **L-Carnitine:** increases energy production in heart tissue and helps make red blood cells. 500mg per day
8. **Vitamin C:** works with Vitamin E as a powerful antioxidant reducing inflammation in the system. 4000-6000mg per day
9. Heart disease is not something you want to treat lightly. Remember, the first sign of heart disease is often sudden death. You can see warning signs creeping up in your blood work long before an event occurs....that is, if you're being tested properly! Get tested today to get a baseline to monitor that your treatment choice is working for you.

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1. Your individual health status and any required health care treatments can only be properly addressed by a professional healthcare provider of your choice. Remember: There is no adequate substitution for a personal consultation with your chosen health care provider. Therefore, we encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.
2. The Constitution guarantees you the right to be your own physician and to prescribe for your own health.