Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Aspirin

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Ascriptin [OTC]; Aspirin 81 [OTC] [DSC]; Aspirin Adult Low Dose [OTC]; Aspirin Adult Low Strength [OTC]; Aspirin Childrens [OTC]; Aspirin EC Adult Low Dose [OTC]; Aspirin EC Low Strength [OTC]; Aspirin Low Dose [OTC]; Bayer Aspirin EC Low Dose [OTC]; Bayer Aspirin [OTC]; Bayer Low Dose [OTC]; Bufferin Extra Strength [OTC]; Bufferin [OTC]; Durlaza [DSC]; FT Aspirin Adult Low Dose [OTC]; FT Aspirin Low Dose [OTC]; FT Aspirin [OTC]; FT Enteric Coated Aspirin [OTC]; GoodSense Aspirin Low Dose [OTC]; GoodSense Aspirin [OTC]; Medi-First Aspirin [OTC]; Medique Aspirin [OTC]; St Joseph Aspirin [OTC] [DSC]; St Joseph Low Dose [OTC] [DSC]; Tri-Buffered Aspirin [OTC] [DSC]; Vazalore [OTC] [DSC]

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat rheumatic fever.
- It is used to ease pain and fever.
- It is used to treat some types of arthritis.
- It is used to protect bypass grafts and stents in the heart.
- It is used to lower the chance of heart attack, stroke, and death in some people.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

For all patients taking this drug:

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have any of these health problems: Asthma, bleeding problems, nose polyps, or nose irritation.
- If you have any of these health problems: Kidney disease or liver disease.
- If you have any of these health problems: GI (gastrointestinal) bleeding or ulcer disease.
- If you are taking another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are taking any other NSAID.
- If you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or get pregnant while taking this drug. This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby if taken at 20 weeks or later in pregnancy. If you are at 20 weeks or later in pregnancy, only take this drug if your doctor has told you to.
- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

Children:

- If the patient is a child. This drug may not be for use in all ages of children.
- If your child or teenager has or is getting better from flu signs, chickenpox, or other viral infections. The risk of a very bad problem called Reye's syndrome may be raised. Do not give this drug to a child or teenager who has or is getting better from a viral infection.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking

with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your blood work checked if you are on this drug for a long time. Talk with your doctor.
- Do not take more than what your doctor told you to take. Taking more than you are told may raise your chance of severe side effects.
- Do not take this drug for longer than you were told by your doctor.
- If you take this drug on a regular basis, do not stop taking it without calling the doctor who ordered it for you.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- If you smoke, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of severe and sometimes deadly stomach or bowel problems like ulcers or bleeding. The risk is greater in older people, and in people who have had stomach or bowel ulcers or bleeding before. These problems may occur without warning signs.
- If you are over the age of 60, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

Extended-release capsules:

- This drug is not for use if you have chest pain and need to take aspirin quickly. Take a fast-acting form of aspirin. If you are not sure which form of aspirin is fast-acting, talk with the doctor.
- Do not take this drug within 2 hours before or 1 hour after drinking alcohol.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of high potassium levels like a heartbeat that does not feel normal; feeling confused; feeling weak, lightheaded, or dizzy; feeling like passing out; numbness or tingling; or shortness of breath.
- Signs of too much acid in the blood (acidosis) like confusion; fast breathing; fast heartbeat; a heartbeat that does not feel normal; very bad stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up; feeling very sleepy; shortness of breath; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.

- Very bad headache.
- Ringing in the ears, hearing loss, or any other changes in hearing.
- Feeling agitated.
- Seizures.

Suppository:

- Bleeding from rectum or rectal pain.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

All oral products:

- Stomach pain or heartburn.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.

Suppository:

- Rectal irritation.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All oral products:

- Take with or without food. Take with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- Take with a full glass of water.

Enteric-coated and buffered tablets:

- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.

Extended-release capsules:

- Swallow whole. Do not chew, open, or crush.
- Take this drug at the same time of day.

Chewable tablets:

- This drug may be chewed or swallowed whole.

Suppository:

- Use suppository rectally.
- If suppository is soft, chill in a refrigerator or run cold water over it.
- To use, take off foil wrapper and wet suppository with cold water. Use your finger to push the suppository well up into the rectum.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Some products are to be taken as needed. If you are taking this drug as

needed, do not take more often than told by your doctor.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

All oral products:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Protect from heat.

Suppository:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Do not use suppositories if they have a vinegar smell.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or

get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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