

Department of Obstetrics

Low Dose Aspirin in Pregnancy

You have been advised to take 150mg of Aspirin at night until 36 weeks in your pregnancy to reduce the risk of developing pre-eclampsia.

This leaflet explains why you have been advised to take Aspirin and about the condition pre-eclampsia.

What is pre-eclampsia?

Pre-eclampsia is a condition that only occurs in pregnancy and is thought to be caused by the placenta (afterbirth). It affects as many as 1 in 10 pregnancies but is often mild, and only affects 1 in 100 pregnancies in severe cases.

There are often no symptoms in mild cases, and it is only detected by high blood pressure and protein in the urine, which your midwife will check at appointments. You may also experience severe headaches, vision problems and swelling in your hands, face and feet.

If left untreated pre-eclampsia can cause significant problems affecting the growth of your baby and your health, which may mean that your baby needs to be delivered earlier.

Who gets pre-eclampsia?

Any woman can get pre-eclampsia in pregnancy; however, there are some women who are more at risk of developing the condition. It might have a genetic link and therefore can run in families.

When you see the midwife at your booking visit, she will ask questions to assess if you are at increased risk of developing the condition. This information is in your hand-held pregnancy records.

Why have I been advised to take Aspirin?

Research has shown that low dose aspirin reduces the risk of developing pre-eclampsia.

Is it safe in pregnancy?

Yes!

Aspirin has been used in pregnancy for a long time with no evidence of causing harm at 150mg per day. It does cross the placenta, but it is not linked to abnormalities in the baby. Aspirin does not increase the risk of bleeding in your baby, before or after it is born.

Although it is advised to take Aspirin, it is an unlicensed use of the medication.

What happens now?

We recommend you take 150mg Aspirin at night from 12 to 36 weeks. We can give you a prescription for Aspirin from the hospital pharmacy and will give you a letter to hand in to your GP so they can carry on prescribing it, but you can also buy this over the counter (you will need to take two 75mg tablets).

You should take the Aspirin with food, if possible, to help reduce the risk of indigestion and stomach ulcers. Don't worry if you occasionally miss a dose. We would recommend taking Aspirin until you have your baby.

If you have previously had stomach ulcers, bleeding disorders or asthma, or are allergic to Aspirin, please consult your Obstetrician before taking Aspirin.

Contact details

If you have any further questions about taking Aspirin in pregnancy or about pre-eclampsia then please speak to your community midwife or contact the Antenatal Clinic on 01603 286794 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

