

For most people, daily aspirin does more harm than good

Ever since drug manufacturers began promoting aspirin as a way to prevent heart attacks, millions of healthy people started swallowing the pills daily. Yet, what they didn't know about aspirin is that, not only can it have serious negative side effects, taking it isn't an effective preventive measure for everyone.

Because of this, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has strongly recommended that clinicians discuss the benefits and **risks** of aspirin therapy with healthy adult patients.

The recommendation was published in a recent issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

The USPSTF said that the regular use of aspirin can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) in *certain* people by about 28%. Only those who have never had a heart attack but are considered at increased risk for CHD may benefit.

However, the Task Force also noted that aspirin can **increase** the incidence of gastrointestinal bleeding, and hemorrhagic strokes which involve bleeding in the brain.

Although the benefits of aspirin outweigh the harm for persons with an increased risk of CHD, the harm may exceed the benefits for those who are at average or low risk for heart disease.

"Aspirin therapy is powerful, and clinicians and patients need to discuss the role of aspirin therapy in combating CHD," said John M. Eisenberg, M.D., director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which sponsors the USPSTF.

SOURCE: *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Jan. 15, 2002.

See Also:

["Aspirin overuse called 'dangerous'"](#)

["Aspirin use linked to acid reflux disease"](#)

["Using aspirin -- even at low doses -- increases risk of internal bleeding"](#)

["Daily aspirin therapy ups risk of brain hemorrhage"](#)

["Does aspirin prevent heart attacks? Don't believe it!"](#)