

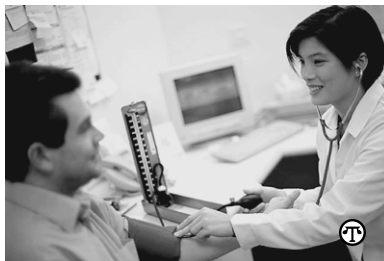


## Low-Dose Aspirin For Heart-Attack Prevention

(NAPSA)—The American Heart Association estimates that each year approximately 1.5 million Americans suffer from a heart attack. In turn, according to a study conducted by the National Institutes of Health of 212 people with acute coronary syndrome, 90 percent of heart-attack survivors received aspirin when discharged from the hospital to prevent a future cardiac event. While many patients may be familiar with the benefits of aspirin therapy, few know how much is too much. Uninformed patients may be putting their gastrointestinal health at risk by taking too much medication. Now, recent guidelines from the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American College of Cardiology (ACC) focus on managing heart health safely and effectively.

The recent AHA/ACC guidelines have lowered the recommended dosage of aspirin for patients with heart disease to between 75 and 162 milligrams a day. Previous guidelines recommended daily amounts as high as 325 milligrams. The updates are a result of recent studies that show low-dose aspirin provides all the benefits without the risk of bleeding associated with higher amounts.

“Research continually supports the use of low-dose aspirin in the prevention of recurrent heart



attacks without the increased risk of stomach bleeding that can be associated with higher doses of aspirin, such as 325 mg,” says Dr. Jayne Middlebrooks, noninvasive cardiologist and director of HealthScreen America in Atlanta, Ga. “Despite recent updates to the AHA guidelines, many of my colleagues still recommend that patients take a standard 325 mg aspirin a day, potentially putting patients at an increased risk for health problems that are easily avoidable.”

Patients taking daily doses of 200 mg or more of aspirin significantly increase their risk of developing major bleeding. In fact, recent studies have shown that low-dose aspirin (defined as 75 mg-150 mg) is as effective as higher doses in protecting against cardiovascular events.

“St. Joseph Aspirin is what I recommend in my practice for all patients at risk for a heart attack,” says Dr. Middlebrooks. “An aspirin a day keeps the doctor away, and research shows that

low-dose aspirin is as effective as higher doses.”

Both men and women are encouraged to talk with their doctors about whether a daily low-dose aspirin regimen is right for them.

There are a number of factors that increase the risk of suffering a heart attack. While some are out of your control, such as family medical history, there are others you can manage. Dr. Middlebrooks shares some tips for preventing heart disease:

- Eating a healthful diet and exercising. A heart-healthy diet is a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and low in saturated fat, for patients who have suffered a heart attack.
  - Maintaining a healthy weight. Being overweight is a major risk factor for coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart attack and stroke. Losing even a small amount of weight can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease.
  - Not smoking or quitting smoking. Smoking is a major cause of coronary artery disease; quitting smoking will decrease your risk of heart attack.
  - Low-dose aspirin therapy. Research shows that taking a low-dose aspirin a day, such as St. Joseph 81 mg Aspirin, can benefit your heart health without the risk of bleeding associated with higher doses of aspirin.
- Aspirin therapy is not appropriate for everyone. Talk to your doctor before revising or starting an aspirin regimen.



**Note to Editors:** Some of the above information can be found in *Circulation*, *Effects of Aspirin Dose When Used Alone or in Combination with Clopidogrel in Patients with Acute Coronary Syndromes: Observations from the Clopidogrel in Unstable Angina to prevent Recurrent Events (CURE) Study*. Oct 2003; 108: 1682-1687.