

Acetylsalicylic Acid (ASA)



The Heart Centre

4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4
604-875-2120 • 1-888-300-3088
Emergency call: 604-875-2161
(ask for Cardiologist on call)
www.bcchildrens.ca

What is acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin®,ASA)?

Aspirin® is a medication that acts to thin the blood and lessen the risk of blood clots to the brain (stroke), heart or lungs. It works by making the platelets less sticky in the blood. It may be used if you have an artificial heart valve or after certain types of heart surgery. It may be used alone or with another medication called Clopidogrel.

ASA comes in chewable tablets, enteric-coated tablets, and regular tablets.

How do I give this medicine?

- ▶ ASA should be given with milk or after food to lessen stomach upset
- ▶ Enteric coated tablets should be swallowed whole with a glass of water, not crushed or chewed
- ▶ Give ___ mL or ___ tablet(s) (= ___ mg) by mouth/NG/GT ___ times a day.

How is this medication stored?

- ▶ At room temperature away from sunlight
- ▶ Keep tablets away from moist or damp places
- ▶ Keep medication out of the reach of small children

What should I do if a dose is missed?

- ▶ Give the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is close to the time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and give the next dose at the normal time.
- ▶ Do **not** double up the dose.
- ▶ If your child vomits within 30 minutes after a dose - give a new dose. If longer than 30 minutes then wait until next normal medication time.

Possible common side effects:

- Mild stomach cramps
- Your child may bleed more easily and for a longer time. Put on pressure if needed
- Mild bleeding or bruising such as bleeding gums with toothbrushing

Call cardiologist, cardiology clinic or seek care if your child has any of the following:

- ▶ Signs of severe bleeding or bruising such as nose bleeds that last for longer than 30 minutes or blood in the stools, urine or vomit
- ▶ Skin rash



Call 911 if any new difficulty breathing, or shortness of breath.

Other notes or special instructions:

- If the child has taken or been given an extra dose and you are worried call Healthlink BC at 811
- If your child accidentally has taken or been given an overdose call:



BC Drug and Poison Centre:

1-800-567-8911 • 604-682-5050

- ▶ High dose ASA is sometimes linked to a health problem called Reye's syndrome. While rare, it can happen if a child has a viral illness, such as chicken pox, and is also taking ASA. It is rare with low anti-platelet doses. **Check with your doctor before giving ASA if your child gets a viral illness.**
- ▶ The effects of aspirin on platelets can last over a week, so before any kind of surgery or dental work, tell the doctor or dentist that your child is taking ASA. They may tell you to stop the ASA before the procedure and when to restart it.
- ▶ Check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new medications, over the counter medication or herbal products.
- ▶ If your child is taking ASA on a regular basis she can also take acetaminophen (Tylenol) if needed for pain control or fevers.