

Aspirin to reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia (1 of 2)

There is a risk that you will develop pre-eclampsia, because of this you are advised to take one 75mg aspirin tablet a day from 12 weeks of pregnancy until your baby is born.

The reason you are at risk is because you have one of the following:

- high blood pressure in a previous pregnancy
- chronic kidney disease
- auto immune disease such as systemic lupus erythematosus or anti phospholipid antibody syndrome
- diabetes
- chronic hypertension.

Or, two or more of the following moderate risk factors:

- first pregnancy
- age 40 or more
- more than 10 years since your last pregnancy
- Significant obesity – a BMI of 35 kg/m² or more at the first visit
- family history of pre-eclampsia
- multiple pregnancy.

What is pre-eclampsia?

Pre-eclampsia is a type of high blood pressure that develops after a woman is 20 weeks pregnant and goes away within 6 weeks of the baby's birth. Women with pre-eclampsia often have protein in their urine (known as proteinuria). Pre-eclampsia can affect both the pregnant woman and her baby. The baby could be affected if the blood supply to the placenta is restricted. Sometimes this means the baby may have to be delivered prematurely if the condition becomes severe.

Why take aspirin?

One 75mg tablet of aspirin daily has been found to reduce the risk of women developing pre-eclampsia. It has a thinning effect on the blood and so improves circulation to the placenta and the growing baby.

Is it safe to take aspirin during pregnancy?

Aspirin is not licensed for use by pregnant women in higher doses such as those used to treat pain but, following extensive research, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommends it for

Maternity Day Assessment Unit
01722 425185



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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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women at risk of pre-eclampsia. 75mg of aspirin is a low dose (less than normally taken for a headache) and is not thought to be harmful to pregnant women taking it on advice from a healthcare professional.

How will I know if I am getting pre-eclampsia?

You will be seen regularly by your midwife or a doctor during pregnancy to look for any signs that pre-eclampsia might be developing.

In between antenatal check-ups if you develop any of the following symptoms, you should immediately contact your midwife, GP or maternity unit:

- severe headache
- blurring of vision or flashing lights
- severe pain under the ribs
- vomiting
- sudden swelling of face, hands and feet.

These may be signs that pre-eclampsia is starting to develop and the doctors on the maternity unit will want to thoroughly assess your condition and make plans for how the rest of your pregnancy should be monitored to keep you and your baby safe.

Who can I contact if I am concerned?

If you have any concerns or queries, do not wait until your next appointment. Contact your midwife as follows:

- leave a message for your midwife which will be picked up after 3pm each day by phoning:

Beatrice Maternity Day Assessment Unit 01722 425185.

- if you need immediate or urgent advice, or are calling after 6pm or at weekends phone:

Beatrice Labour Ward 01722 425183.

Where can I get more information about pre-eclampsia?

For more information about pre-eclampsia, visit the Action on Pre-eclampsia website:

www.apec.org.uk