

## Should you take aspirin to reduce your risk of heart attack?

Our patients ask this question frequently, and this document and a simple calculation can give you the best answer, tailored to your own situation.

If you are at high risk for heart attack, absolutely you should. The dose is one baby aspirin or one adult aspirin every day, or even every other day.

If you aren't at high risk for heart attack, taking aspirin can actually put you at higher risk. That is because aspirin, while usually well tolerated, can sometimes cause problems, mainly bleeding and stomach ulcers.

The best recommendation is likely a study (N Engl J Med 2002; 346:1468-1474, May 9, 2002) that looked at all the evidence for and against using aspirin for primary prophylaxis, and showed that:

- If your Framingham risk score is greater than or equal to 15% in ten years, you should take aspirin.
- If your Framingham score is less than or equal to 5%, you are likely worse off taking aspirin.
- If your score is between 5-15%, you are likely just trading off risks, and your decision should be based on your personal preferences.

You can access a Framingham 10 year risk calculator via the "links" page on our website (or here: <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/atp/iii/calculator.asp>)