

Aspirin, The “Wonder drug”

The research on aspirin is promising: The well-known “wonder drug” may help to both prevent and treat heart attacks.

A study of more than 87,000 women found that those who took a low dose of aspirin regularly were less likely to suffer a first heart attack than women who took no aspirin.

Women over the age of 50 appeared to benefit most. While earlier research has shown that aspirin can help prevent heart attacks in men, this was the first study to suggest a similar result for women.

One study found that both women and men taking only 30mg of aspirin daily—one tenth the strength of regular aspirin—helped prevent heart attacks as effectively as the usual 300mg dose. The smaller dose caused less stomach irritation.

Aspirin also reduces the chance that women who have already had a heart attack or stroke will have, or die from, another one. Aspirin may increase the chances of survival after a heart attack, if it is taken quickly

A major study showed that taking a low dose of aspirin within the first hours of an attack reduced deaths by 23%. However, you should not take aspirin to either treat or prevent a heart attack without first discussing it with your doctor. Aspirin is a powerful drug with many side effects. It can increase your chances of getting ulcers, kidney disease, liver disease and stroke from a hemorrhage.

Only a doctor who knows your complete medical history and current health can judge whether the benefits you may gain outweigh the risks.