

♥ HEART HEALTH

A Heart-To-Heart On Aspirin Therapy

(NAPSA)—Cardiovascular diseases claim 100,000 African-American lives annually; and while heart disease is the number one killer of all Americans, African-American women experience a two-thirds higher risk of death than other women.

Atlanta cardiologist Dr. Jayne Middlebrooks answers questions on heart disease and the role of low-dose aspirin therapy to prevent recurrent heart attacks and stroke.

How does heart disease affect African Americans?

While diet, higher stress levels and access to health care may play a role in this increased risk to African Americans, some research suggests that biological differences may be factors as well.

The good news is that many heart disease risk factors can be controlled. You should talk to your doctor about your overall heart disease risk and take steps—including, if appropriate, daily low-strength aspirin therapy—to reduce your risk of a recurrent heart attack or stroke.

How do you decide who may benefit from daily aspirin therapy?

First I look at their overall risk for heart disease. I consider their age, medical history, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. I also determine whether they have any health conditions that can contribute to heart disease—like diabetes or smoking—or family history of heart disease. After reviewing all of this information, I decide if my patient would benefit from low-strength aspirin therapy.

What aspirin dosage do you recommend to your patients?

I recommend 81mg aspirin. It's just a quarter the dose of a regular strength aspirin, but it has been shown to be as effective in preventing a recurrent heart attack or stroke. Furthermore, higher doses of aspirin are associated with increased risk of stomach problems. If you're currently taking regular strength aspirin for your heart, talk to your doctor about whether 81mg low-strength aspirin is right for you.



Cardiologist Dr. Jayne Middlebrooks recommends low-strength aspirin therapy for the prevention of recurrent heart attacks and stroke.

How common is it for people to take more aspirin than they may need?

Currently, 58 percent of the 26 million Americans who are on an aspirin therapy for their heart may be taking more than they need. In the case of aspirin, more is not always better.

If I'm taking aspirin therapy, do I need to be careful about the other medications I take?

Yes. A recent *New England Journal of Medicine* study found that ibuprofen, a common ingredient in several over-the-counter pain relievers, may interfere with the way aspirin works to reduce the risk of a recurrent heart attack. If you need to take a pain reliever while you're on daily 81mg aspirin therapy, talk to your doctor about acetaminophen, the medicine found in Tylenol®.

Is aspirin therapy right for everyone?

No, there are risks associated with aspirin. If you have aspirin allergies, stomach ulcers or reduced kidney or liver function, you may not be a candidate for aspirin therapy.

Talk with your doctor about your risk and whether St. Joseph 81mg Adult Low Strength Aspirin is right for you. You can also visit www.81mg.com to learn more about low strength aspirin therapy.