



INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS ON CHRONIC ASPIRIN THERAPY

Some of our patients with heart defects or Kawasaki disease are prescribed low dose, daily aspirin; this is used to stop platelets from clumping together, so blood clots are less likely to form. Below are some general guidelines regarding NSAID's, live virus vaccines, and viral illness for patients who are on low dose aspirin.

NSAID's

Do not take NSAID's (e.g. ibuprofen, naproxen, or Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Naprosyn) while taking aspirin. This is because taking these medications together could increase side effects (e.g. bleeding). Also, taking the drugs together can reverse the effect of aspirin on the platelets. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be safely given to treat pain or fever.

Reye syndrome

Reye syndrome is a very rare, but serious, condition that affects the brain and liver. The risk of Reye syndrome is increased in children taking higher doses of aspirin during or after viral illness.

Flu vaccine

Do not give live influenza vaccine while on aspirin, because there is a slightly increased risk of Reye syndrome. Inactivated influenza vaccine can, and should, be safely given every year.

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine

There have been no reports of Reye syndrome after varicella vaccine while taking low dose aspirin. Therefore, the risk of Reye syndrome in this situation is close to zero. Because of the theoretical risk of Reye syndrome, the FDA recommends that aspirin be avoided for 6 weeks after varicella vaccine is given. Another antiplatelet medication (for example, dipyridamole or clopidogrel) can be substituted for aspirin during that time. Please inform your pediatrician that your child is taking aspirin, so that this can be discussed prior to giving the vaccine.

Viral illness

Reye syndrome has been reported in children taking aspirin during active illness varicella (chickenpox) or influenza, and the risk seems to be higher if the aspirin dose is higher. Please inform your pediatrician right away if your child develops any symptoms of these illnesses. Although a substitute medication for aspirin can be considered for 2 weeks, this is not required since in children taking *low* dose aspirin, the risk of Reye syndrome is close to zero.