

Title: Low dose aspirin should be continued in the perioperative period for patients with cardiac risk factors who are scheduled for non-cardiac surgery

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Abstract: Low-dose aspirin is strongly recommended for prevention of a heart attack in patients with known cardiac risk factors. These risk factors include previous heart attack, coronary artery disease (CAD), heart failure, poor kidney function, and insulin dependent diabetes mellitus. Patients are commonly instructed to discontinue low-dose aspirin before surgery because of the anti-platelet effect of the drug may increase surgical bleeding and surgical complications. Despite these concerns, there is evidence that patients who take low-dose aspirin prior to surgery have less risk of heart attack, and do not have an increased number of complications from surgical bleeding.

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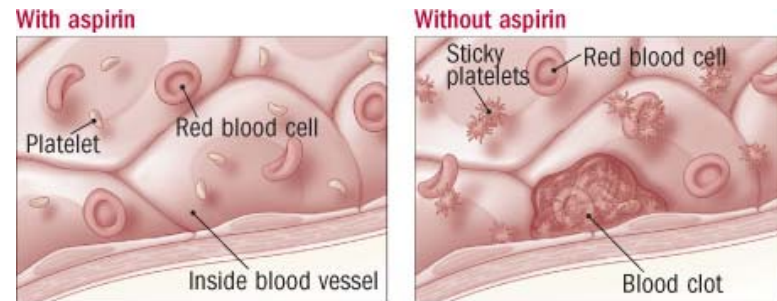
## Why do I take low dose aspirin?

- In patients at risk, daily low-dose aspirin has been proven to help prevent heart attacks and strokes
- You likely take aspirin if you have any of the following risk factors:
  - Previous Heart attack
  - Coronary artery disease
  - Congestive Heart Failure
  - Poor kidney function
  - Prior stroke or TIA
  - Insulin dependent diabetes mellitus
- Many people chose to take an over the counter daily aspirin with out the recommendation of their healthcare provider because they think it will decrease their risk of having a heart attack.



## How does Aspirin work?

- Aspirin is an “antiplatelet medicine.” It helps reduce the risk of clots forming in your blood.
- Platelets are tiny particles in your blood that help it to clot. Antiplatelet medicines work by reducing the 'stickiness' of these platelets.



Adapted from [www.healthline.com](http://www.healthline.com), aspirin guide

## Why would I stop taking aspirin before surgery?

- When patients taking aspirin get a cut, it may take longer for the cut to stop bleeding.
- Surgery almost always includes the cutting of tissue, so you will have bleeding during your surgery.
- Patients on aspirin may bleed longer or a greater amount than patients not taking aspirin.
- Excessive bleeding during surgery makes the surgery more difficult and can result in poorer outcomes.



## What are the risks of stopping my aspirin before surgery?

- If you stop taking your low-dose aspirin, you increase your risk of blood clots and a heart attack. This risk is higher than the risk of major bleeding during or after most operations for those who continue use of aspirin.
- Although continuing to take your medicine may slightly increase the risk of bleeding, your surgeon will be aware of this. They will take steps to control any bleeding.
- The evidence also shows that continuing to take your daily aspirin does not increase the risk of surgical complications.
- Although you may think that stopping your aspirin for a short time carries a low risk, remember that it's been prescribed to help you with a long-term condition. Stopping your medicine, even for a short time, could be harmful.
- Your medical provider or surgeon will determine if stopping your medicine is appropriate for you depending on your risk factors and the type of surgery you are having.
- *Only* stop taking your aspirin medicine if your healthcare professional tells you to do so.

