

## Aspirin & Fish Oils

The use of long-term aspirin often does more harm than good. It can cause gastric bleeding, ulcers, suppress the immune system and promote macular degeneration that causes blindness.

A study published in the *British Medical Journal* found that the risk of gastrointestinal haemorrhage (bleeding) with aspirin doesn't change, whether the dose you take a small or large dose. In other words, lowering your dose won't decrease the risk of this adverse effect, and while aspirin decreases the risk of some types of strokes, it increases the risk of other types.

Aspirin essentially works by blocking the production of hormone-like substances called prostaglandins that regulate cells in the body in many of their complex interactions.

Prostaglandins are a group of fatty acids normally manufactured within the body. Prostaglandins act in a manner similar to that of hormones, they stimulate their target cells into action. However, they differ from hormones in that they act locally on cells where they were produced.

Some prostaglandins, when made in the body in excess, promote heart disease, inflammation and pain.

Aspirin very effectively blocks these prostaglandins, this is good, except that aspirin will also block the formation of both the 'good' and 'bad' ones, and in the process of suppressing these good prostaglandins, also suppress the immune system.

While the bad prostaglandins can make your blood more likely to aggregate or clump together and cause a stroke or heart attack; good prostaglandins lower blood pressure, inhibit blood stickiness, the production of cholesterol and reduce inflammatory reactions.

Much of heart disease has to do with the fact that bad prostaglandins are outweighing good prostaglandins.

There are other natural substances we can use to prevent heart disease without aspirin's side effects. Most of the good are made from the omega-3 oils, including DHA and EPA (found in deep-water fish) and alpha-linolenic acid (found abundantly in flaxseeds, walnuts and pumpkin seeds).

Most of the good and ALL the bad prostaglandins are made from an omega-6 oil called gamma-linoleic acid (GLA), a type of essential fatty acid found in fruits, vegetables and grains. You

need GLA to make the majority of good prostaglandins and not only that, it needs to go down the good pathway.

What drives GLA down the wrong pathway to become the bad prostaglandins, is primarily our diet: hydrogenated oils such as margarines, diets high in refined carbohydrates and sugar. Viral illnesses and excessive adrenal (stress) hormones can also cause your body to create more bad than good prostaglandins.

There are small amounts of GLA oils in oatmeal, trace amounts in many fruits and vegetables and significant amounts in borage oil. However, your GLA oils should be balanced with a specific type of omega-3 oil, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) found in fish, which will inhibit the production of bad prostaglandins without bothering the good ones.

Good sources of cold-water fish such as salmon, cod, bass, halibut, sardines, tuna and flounder should be eaten at least twice a week, or you can take quality manufactured fish oil capsules, which have had the cholesterol, organophosphates, PCB's, heavy metals etc., taken out of them.

You need to consume your GLA and EPA either through your diet or supplementation for a few months to get your prostaglandin pathways in good working order.

There is an amazing amount of misinformation out there about fats and oils and what they do in the body. Our teams of professionals are there to assist you, when it comes to choosing the correct dietary or supplementary approach to regulating your prostaglandins.

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