

## Using antiplatelet medicine **safely**

- Know how to use these medicines properly – at the right time, in the right dose and for how long.
- If you are going to have an operation or dental work tell your doctors, dentists, pharmacists and nurses you are taking antiplatelet medicines.
- Talk to your doctor before starting any new medicines, including medicines from alternative practitioners, health food shops, supermarkets and pharmacies.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you maintain an accurate list of ALL your medicines.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about possible side effects from your medicines and what to do if they occur.

For more information:

Talk to your doctor  
or pharmacist

Ask for a Consumer Medicine  
Information (CMI) leaflet

## Veterans' **MATES**

[www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates](http://www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates)

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## Veterans' **MATES**

Antiplatelet medicines  
that help prevent  
heart attack or stroke

Aspirin  
Clopidogrel

Get the best from  
your medicines





## What are **antiplatelet** medicines?

The two most common types of antiplatelet medicines are:

- **Aspirin** - Brands available with a prescription include Astrix<sup>®</sup>, Cardiprin<sup>®</sup>, Cartia<sup>®</sup> and Solprin<sup>®</sup>. There are many other brands available without a prescription.
- **Clopidogrel** (klo-PID-oh-grel) - Brands available with a prescription include Iscover<sup>®</sup> and Plavix<sup>®</sup>.

Antiplatelet medicines reduce the risk of blood clotting. This helps to lower the risk of a stroke or heart attack. You may have been prescribed an antiplatelet medicine because you:

- are at risk of heart attack or stroke
- have had a heart attack, severe angina or a stroke
- have had a coronary artery stent, or bypass graft
- have peripheral arterial disease (narrowing of blood vessels in the legs or arms).



## what

### Aspirin or Clopidogrel?

Both these medicines work well. Aspirin is often used but sometimes your doctor may recommend clopidogrel.

If you have recently had a heart attack or a coronary artery stent placed, your doctor may prescribe both aspirin and clopidogrel.

Both medicines can slightly increase the risk of bleeding in the stomach or brain. For most people this risk is small when compared to the benefit in helping to prevent a stroke or heart attack.



## tips

### What are the possible **side effects**?

Most people can take these medicines without any noticeable side effects. There are however some important side effects you need to be aware of.

**Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:**

- Abnormal bruising or bleeding
- Bloody or black bowel motions
- New dizziness or blurred vision
- Slurred speech or difficulty speaking
- Sudden or severe itching or skin rash
- Swelling of the face, lips or tongue
- Persistent nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, heartburn or indigestion.

**Never stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor first.**

