



Good Luck Penguins!



PIC QUESTION OF THE WEEK: 3/30/09

Q: What are the current guidelines for using aspirin for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease?

A: The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has just issued new recommendations for the use of aspirin (ASA) in the *primary* prevention of cardiovascular disease. Based on best available evidence, the guidelines apply only to the prevention of stroke in women and myocardial infarction (MI) in men. There are no suggestions for ASA prophylaxis in those ≥ 80 years. The accompanying table includes general indications for the use of ASA in primary prevention. It is important to note that aspirin administration should be based on the patient's risk of cardiovascular events and consideration of factors such as age, diabetes, hypertension, smoking, and cholesterol values. The presence of atrial fibrillation and left ventricular hypertrophy must also be considered as risk factors for stroke in women. Although not recommended by the USPSTF, some physicians may still consider using ASA in both men and women for prevention of both MI and stroke. This guideline and evidence from recent studies indicate that the optimal prophylactic dose of ASA is 75-81 mg per day. Data from several large trials (e.g., BRAVO, CURE, CHARISMA, and the WHS) conclude that higher doses of aspirin are not more efficacious, but do result in an increased incidence of gastrointestinal bleeding. If the risk of bleeding exceeds potential benefits, ASA should not be used for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease.

	Age	Aspirin Recommendation
Men (MI)	< 45 Years	Not encouraged
	45-79 Years	Encouraged when potential benefits outweigh risks of GI bleed
Women (Stroke)	< 55 Years	Not encouraged
	55-79 Years	Encouraged when potential benefits outweigh risks of GI bleed

Adapted from: U.S. Preventive Services Taskforce Statement on Aspirin for Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease. Ann Intern Med 2009;150:396-404.

References:

- Wolff T, Miller M, Ko S. Aspirin for the prevention of cardiovascular disease: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendation statement. Ann Intern Med 2009;150:403-10.
- Mehta SR. Aspirin for prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease. Ann Intern Med 2009;150:414-5.

Photo by: Dan4th Name: Pittsburgh Penguins line change used under Creative Commons License;
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/dan4th/2301509809/> (Accessed March 24, 2009)

Ashley T. Jakosh and Alexis L. Kay Pharm.D. Candidates

The PIC Question of the Week is a publication of the Pharmaceutical Information Center, Mylan School of Pharmacy, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA 15282 (412.396.4600).