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# Is Trump taking too much aspirin? Here's what experts say

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President Donald Trump speaks during an event on prescription drug prices in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on Dec. 19.

Evan Vucci/AP

President Donald Trump said he takes a higher dose of daily aspirin than his doctors recommend and he has been doing so for 25 years.

The comments came in a wide-ranging interview with *The Wall Street Journal* published Thursday.

"They say aspirin is good for thinning out the blood, and I don't want thick blood pouring through my heart," Trump, 79, told *The Journal*. "I want nice, thin blood pouring through my heart. Does that make sense?"

The president takes 325 milligrams of daily aspirin — one "adult" over-the-counter pill. That is four times higher than the recommended 81 milligram low-dose aspirin used for cardiovascular disease prevention.

What do doctors and researchers say?

Since 2022, the nation's leading panel of experts in disease prevention, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, has recommended anyone over 60 not start taking a daily dose of aspirin to prevent cardiovascular disease, if they don't already have an underlying problem. The group said it's reasonable to stop preventive aspirin in people already taking it around age 75 years.



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#### Older adults shouldn't start a routine of daily aspirin, task force says

Here's more of what you need to know about aspirin and cardiac health.

#### **What is aspirin, and what is it used for?**

Aspirin — part of the same family of drugs as ibuprofen and naproxen — at low doses reduces the production of a molecule that helps blood clots form.

The over-the-counter drug is commonly used to relieve headaches and pain in adults. It's also used as a prophylactic medication — as in Trump's case — in about one in seven older Americans.

#### **The ideal dose**

Experts recommend that these patients take 81 milligrams of aspirin every day to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. (The dose used to be described as a "baby aspirin," but aspirin is no longer recommended for regular use in children.)

The low dose is often prescribed — rather than Trump's 325 milligram dose — because there's no benefit to taking a higher dose, according to a large study published in 2021.

"There's some evidence that if you've already tolerated the higher dose of 325 milligrams, there's probably very little additional risk to taking that over the 81 milligram dose," says Dr. Eleanor Levin, a preventive cardiologist at Stanford Medicine. "The higher dose is unnecessary, though."



## POLITICS

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Some patients should take low-dose aspirin for their entire life — regardless of their age. These include adults who have undergone heart bypass surgery to reroute blood around a clogged heart artery and those who have had a heart attack, among others. Levin also recommends that certain patients with asymptomatic coronary disease — buildup or narrowing of the heart's arteries — take the drug regardless of age.

Trump was diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency in July, and a memo released by the White House in December noted his cardiovascular system is in "excellent health."

### **Common side effects of aspirin**

Though safer than other blood thinners, patients taking the drug — even at low doses — are at an increased risk of bleeding in the stomach and brain. But these adverse events are unlikely to cause death.

Bleeding risk rises with age, and Levin says alcohol use can increase that risk further. Aspirin can also cause less severe bleeding, such as bruising and small cuts. Trump has experienced both and his doctor attributed the symptoms to his use of aspirin, according to a White House memo from July. Levin says these side effects are common and not alarming.

"This shows it's working," Levin says. "As you get in your late 70s and 80s, you get a lot of thinning of the skin, so it's more delicate. You'll have patients come in, and

they don't remember bumping against a table or a chair, and they have bruises all over their arms."

During *The Journal* interview, Trump also addressed concerns about his hearing and sleep, which he largely dismissed. While age-related hearing loss is more common, aspirin can also cause hearing difficulties known as tinnitus. Its effect on sleep is not widely understood.

### **Is more aspirin better — or dangerous?**

Levin says Trump's unconventional use of aspirin is likely not life-threatening, though she says she doesn't recommend her patients take higher doses of aspirin if not warranted.

She added that anything above 2,400 milligrams — a dose historically used to treat arthritis — should be considered high-dose aspirin, and even higher amounts come with serious safety risks.

"I'm sure his doctors told him the same thing," Levin says. "We don't have to raise alarm bells."

But she gives her patients different directions: "We have a discussion of the risks versus benefits and an informed discussion. We go by the literature and the studies, and they follow my advice."

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