

## Antiplatelet Medicines

### *After your stent or percutaneous coronary intervention*

*This handout explains medicines you will receive after your stent or percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) to help keep clots from forming.*

### What are antiplatelet medicines?

*Anti* means “against” and *platelets* are blood cells that help clotting. *Antiplatelet* medicines help keep clots from forming in your blood and around any stent(s) placed in your heart.



*Always take medicines exactly as prescribed.*

### Why do I need them?

Most patients who have a stent or percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) need to take 2 antiplatelet medicines after their procedure.

- **Do not stop taking your antiplatelet medicines** unless your *cardiologist* (heart doctor) tells you to do so. Stopping or missing these medicines can result in clotting in and around your stent or intervention treatment site.
- **Do not run out of your antiplatelet medicines.** Be sure to refill your prescription before your supply gets low. Call your doctor or pharmacy right away if you cannot take your antiplatelet medicines for any reason.

### What medicines will I be taking?

After a stent or PCI, most patients take:

- 1 of these antiplatelet medicines:
  - Clopidogrel (Plavix): 75 mg by mouth, once a day
  - Prasugrel (Effient): 10 mg by mouth, once a day
  - Ticagrelor (Brilinta): 90 mg by mouth, 2 times a day (every 12 hours)
- Plus 81 mg aspirin by mouth, once a day

## Why do I also need to take aspirin?

Aspirin is also an antiplatelet medicine, but it works differently than clopidogrel, prasugrel, and ticagrelor.

You will take low-dose or “baby” aspirin that contains only 81 mg per tablet. You can buy this aspirin at your local drugstore. **Read the aspirin label carefully.** Make sure to buy 81 mg tablets.

You do not need a prescription for aspirin. Some brand names are Bayer, Ecotrin, and St. Joseph. There are also generic brands.

## How do I take clopidogrel, prasugrel, or ticagrelor?

- You will take **only 1** of these medicines.
- You can take the tablets with or without food.
- Tablets may be crushed, if needed.
- Try to take your medicine around the same time every day.

## How do I take aspirin?

- If your doctor tells you to take aspirin, take one 81mg tablet every day.
- You can take your aspirin with or without food.
- Some patients may have stomach problems (indigestion) when they take aspirin. If this occurs, try taking your aspirin with food. Or, try enteric-coated 81 mg tablets.
- If needed, you may crush your regular 81 mg aspirin tablets. Do **not** crush tablets that are *enteric-coated* (see label).

## Are there any side effects from taking aspirin and another antiplatelet medicine at the same time?

You may have very minor bleeding. It is normal to have these symptoms from time to time:

- Gums bleeding when you brush your teeth
- Nose bleeds
- Easy bruising
- More bleeding than normal from small cuts

## When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you:

- Get sick and cannot take your medicines
- Fall and hit your head

Call your doctor or come to the emergency room **right away** if you have any of these signs of more serious bleeding:

- Red or dark brown urine
- Red or black tarry stool
- Vomiting or coughing up blood (it may look like coffee grounds)
- Severe headache or stomachache
- Bruises that appear for no reason
- Any bleeding that does not stop or is very heavy

## Can I take other medicines while taking antiplatelet medicines?

Your risk of bleeding can increase if you take certain other medicines while you are taking antiplatelet medicines. Do **not** take any of the medicines listed here without first checking with your doctor:

- Other aspirin products, such as Alka-Seltzer, Excedrin, Nyquil, and Pepto-Bismol
- *Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs* (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, and others), celecoxib (Celebrex), diclofenac (Cataflam, Voltaren), indomethacin (Indocin), meloxicam (Mobic), and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn, and others)
- Warfarin (Coumadin), dabigatran (Pradaxa), apixaban (Eliquis), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), and edoxaban (Savaysa)

## If You Are Taking Clopidogrel

Some drugs that treat and prevent heartburn can affect how well clopidogrel works. Do **not** take any of these medicines without first checking with your doctor:

- Omeprazole (Prilosec), esomeprazole (Nexium), and omeprazole-sodium bicarbonate (Zegerid)

## What else do I need to know while I am taking antiplatelet medicines?

- You do not need to be monitored while taking these medicines.
- You can eat all types of foods. There are no eating restrictions.
- Tell **all** your healthcare and dental providers that you are taking these medicines.
- You may need to stop taking these medicines before you have medical or dental procedures. Talk with your cardiologist if you plan to have any procedures. **Do NOT stop taking your antiplatelet medicines unless your cardiologist tells you to.**
- Avoid alcohol while taking these medicines. Alcohol may increase your risk of bleeding. If you do drink alcohol:
  - Do **not** have more than 1 drink a day (1 drink = 1 beer *or* 1 glass of wine *or* 1 cocktail *or* 1 shot).
  - Do **not** have more than 2 drinks at a time every now and then.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

#### Heart Institute at UW Medical Center

Weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to  
5 p.m., call 206.598.VALV  
(206.598.8258)

After hours or on weekends or  
holidays, call 206.598.6190 and  
ask to page the Cardiology I  
provider on call.