



ANTIPLATELETS

Enteric Coated ASA 81mg
(Aspirin®)

Ticagrelor 90mg
(Brilinta®)



What does this medication do?

Antiplatelet medications (sometimes called “blood thinners”) **lower your risk of having another heart attack.** They work by making your blood less sticky and **preventing clots** from forming inside the blood vessels (arteries) of your heart. If you have stents in your heart arteries, taking both ASA and ticagrelor is especially important as they will **prevent your stents from being plugged by blood clots.**

Make sure that you fill your prescriptions for ASA and ticagrelor as soon as you leave the hospital.

How should you take these medications?

- **Take these medications exactly as prescribed.** ASA is taken **ONCE** daily. Ticagrelor is taken **TWICE** daily.
- Space ticagrelor doses evenly throughout the day.
- It is **very important not to miss any doses**, especially if you have had one or more stents placed. Missed doses can increase the risk of a clot forming in your stent. This may lead to another heart attack.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. **DO NOT** take an extra dose to make up for the missed dose.
- You may buy ASA without a prescription, but do not take more ASA than you have been prescribed.
- **DO NOT stop taking these medications** without talking to your heart doctor.

What side effects may occur?

The most common important side effect of taking antiplatelets is **bleeding.**

Signs of **minor bleeding** include:

- Nosebleeds
- Bruising
- Cuts that bleed for longer
- Bleeding gums



If you get a cut or nosebleed, **apply pressure for several minutes** until the bleeding stops. Minor bleeding is **NOT** a reason to stop antiplatelets.

Signs of serious bleeding can include:

- Blood in your stools (poop) or urine (pee), black tarry stools (poop)
- Bad stomach pain
- Coughing up blood
- Vomit that looks bloody or looks like coffee grounds
- Large amounts of bleeding or bruising



If you experience any of these, **seek medical attention right away.**

Note: Medications such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®), and higher-dose ASA (Aspirin®) can increase your risk of bleeding. If you need to take a pain medication, acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is a safer option.

Other, less severe side effects may include:

- Upset stomach, heartburn (acid reflux)

Take these medications with food to prevent upset stomach.

Some people who take ticagrelor may feel **short of breath.** This usually goes away with time and is not a reason to stop taking it.

When to contact your healthcare provider:

- Signs of serious bleeding (see points to the left)
- A bad fall or hit to your head
- Any bothersome side effects

Make sure your healthcare providers (doctor, dentist, pharmacist, or other) know that you are taking these medications. You may need to stop taking them before some kinds of surgery or dental procedures, as long as this is approved by your heart doctor.

Talk to your pharmacist or other healthcare provider to make sure your medications do not interact with your antiplatelets (including vitamins, over-the-counter medications, and herbal products).