Aspirin Encyclopedia Article

Aspirin

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Aspirin

Common name for acetylsalicylic acid, a common nonprescription drug used to relieve pain and reduce inflammation.

Acetylsalicylic acid, commonly known as aspirin or ASA, is a white, odorless medication available without a doctor's prescription, generally in tablet form. It is a relatively safe drug for adults, but is not recommended for children in most situations. Aspirin has been associated with increased likelihood of developing Reye's syndrome when given to children with viral illness. Although Reye's syndrome is a rare disease affecting the liver and central nervous system, alternate pain relievers are recommended for children with fever or other symptoms treatable with a general pain reliever. Aspirin is used to relieve headache and other general pain, to alleviate the pain of **arthritis,** to reduce fever, and to reduce inflammation and swelling due to injuries. *Side effects:* Aspirin may irritate the lining of the stomach and can cause stomach bleeding.

See Also

Acetaminophen.