



Title: Stocking Aspirin in First Aid Kits
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Department: Lifesaving
Audience: Clubs and Branches
Summary: Guidance on Aspirin in lifesaving operations.
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Purpose

This briefing provides clubs with clear guidance on the inclusion of aspirin as part of first aid treatment for a conscious adult experiencing symptoms consistent with a suspected heart attack, where aspirin is available and there is no known anaphylaxis to aspirin.

Guidance and Rationale

Surf Life Saving follows the ANZCOR guidelines. ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.1 recommends that first aiders give 300 mg of aspirin orally to adults with non-traumatic chest pain unless the person has a known anaphylaxis to aspirin. This advice applies to conscious adults and should be used alongside standard emergency response actions, including calling an ambulance and monitoring the person until further care takes over. This requires clubs to stock aspirin in their first aid kits. Aspirin has been included in previous public safety and aquatic rescue guidance, including PSAR35 it has also been included in this years skills maintenance.

From a risk perspective, not providing aspirin when it forms part of the recognised standard of care may expose the organisation, clubs and individual lifesavers to greater risk than not providing it in line with the guideline.

Implementation Requirements

ANZCOR undertook a checking process before recommending aspirin for suspected heart attack management and was reassured that there were no regulatory barriers across states. Clubs should therefore focus on implementing the guidance consistently, ensuring responders act within their training, and maintaining accurate incident records in line with applicable legislation and organisational requirements. Clubs should hold and treat aspirin as an accepted component of first aid response for a conscious adult experiencing symptoms of suspected heart attack, where available and where there is no known anaphylaxis. The priority is prompt emergency response, correct use of the guideline, and complete documentation.

Surf Life Saving Queensland

18 Manning Street
South Brisbane QLD 4101
PO Box 3747
South Brisbane QLD 4101
t. +61 7 3846 8000
f. +61 7 3846 8008
w. lifesaving.com.au
ABN 27 360 485 381

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FAQ

Where should aspirin be stored?

Aspirin should be kept in the first aid room and included in the mobile soft pack so it is readily available during patrol and emergency response activities.

When should expiry dates be checked?

Clubs should check aspirin expiry dates before the start of each season and replace any stock that will expire during the season. Most aspirin products have a shelf life of several years, but dates should always be confirmed on the packaging.

Is there a treatment flow chart?

A one-page treatment flow chart is attached. Clubs are encouraged to circulate it to relevant members and display a printed copy in the first aid room for easy reference.

For any further questions, please contact your relevant Lifesaving Coordinator.

Thank you,

Sam Fien

State Lifesaving Officer

Natalie Edwards

Lifesaving Services Manager



ASPIRIN 300 mg

FIRST AID FOR SUSPECTED CARDIAC CHEST PAIN
Advice for states rolling out Aspirin administration

WHY WE GIVE ASPIRIN A heart attack is usually caused by a blood clot blocking an artery to the heart. Aspirin reduces platelet clumping, helps limit further clot growth and **reduces mortality**. It is not given to treat pain - pain will continue despite aspirin.

1 WHEN TO GIVE ASPIRIN

1. An adult has non-traumatic chest pain or discomfort and a heart attack is suspected.
2. Typical discomfort is central pressure, tightness, heaviness, fullness or squeezing. It may spread to the neck, jaw, shoulders, back or either arm.
3. Other warning signs include shortness of breath, pale or clammy skin, sweating, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, light-headedness or collapse, especially in women and diabetic patients, who may not have pain.
4. Pain/discomfort may be mild or feel like indigestion.
5. Call 000 for everyone with chest pain/discomfort or warning signs.
6. Do not delay calling 000 to give aspirin.

2 DO NOT GIVE ASPIRIN IF

1. There is known anaphylaxis or a severe allergy to aspirin.
2. The person is under 18 years old.
3. The person is actively bleeding
4. The chest pain follows trauma, or
5. The person cannot safely chew and swallow (including reduced consciousness).

IF UNCERTAIN If the person cannot answer the screening questions, or the cause of pain is unclear, consider calling 000 for advice, or follow a paramedic, emergency nurse or doctor's advice.

3 HOW TO ADMINISTER

1. **Stop, rest and call.** Stop activity, place the person at rest in a comfortable position, call Triple Zero (000), and bring an AED if available.
2. **Check and explain.** Explain what aspirin does and obtain consent. Ask about traumatic injuries, aspirin anaphylaxis/allergy, and active bleeding. Do not give aspirin if these are present.
3. **Give 300 mg aspirin tablet once.** Give ONE 300 mg aspirin tablet orally. Ask the person to chew it thoroughly, then swallow.
4. **Monitor and hand over.** Do not repeat the dose of aspirin. Stay with the person and monitor breathing and responsiveness. If unresponsive and not breathing normally, start CPR and use the AED.

4 RECORD IN THE FIRST AID RECORD

In the treatment section of the first aid record, note:

1. Presenting symptoms and reason aspirin was given;
2. Date and time of administration of aspirin;
3. Medicine, dose, route and form: usually "Aspirin 300 mg, oral, chewed."
4. First aider's name and signature.
5. 000 call time and ambulance handover.

BE SPECIFIC Do not write only 'aspirin given'. The record should show the dose, route and time.

5 PURCHASE, STORE AND CHECK EXPIRY

PURCHASE THE RIGHT PRODUCT AND STORE CORRECTLY

1. Aspirin 300 mg, immediate-release or dispersible, as the single active ingredient. Do not buy enteric-coated 100mg tablets.
2. Buy in a child-resistant container with no more than 25 tablets.
3. A qualifying small pack may be purchased from a pharmacy or supermarket, subject to local availability.
4. Keep it in the original labelled packaging; do not decant.
5. Store securely, dry place.
6. Protect from extremes of heat and cold.
7. It may be reasonable to store this in a first aid room and access it when required, rather than storing it in every first aid kit.

CHECK ASPIRIN EXPIRY AT EVERY KIT CHECK AND BEFORE USE

1. Find 'EXP' on the blister/strip or container. It must be legible.
2. A month/year expiry is valid to the last day of that month unless an exact date is printed.
3. Confirm the packaging is sealed and the tablet is intact and dry. Remove and replace expired, damaged or opened stock.

6 GENERAL ADVICE

DO NOT USE ASPIRIN FOR OTHER CAUSES OF PAIN

1. Aspirin is not supported for other pains (e.g. headache, musculoskeletal pain etc.) by first aiders.
2. Generally, there are safer and more effective treatments for pain than aspirin, but these need to be assessed by a healthcare professional.

CHECK SpO2 AND CONSIDER GIVING OXYGEN

1. If a patient has chest pain, measure the oxygen saturation (SpO2) with a pulse oximeter.
2. Oxygen is indicated in chest pain only when the SpO2 is less than 92%
3. Give the lowest flow of oxygen required to get the SpO2 above 92%.
4. Giving oxygen when it is not needed may be harmful in heart attacks.