

# HARDENING OF THE ARTERIES:

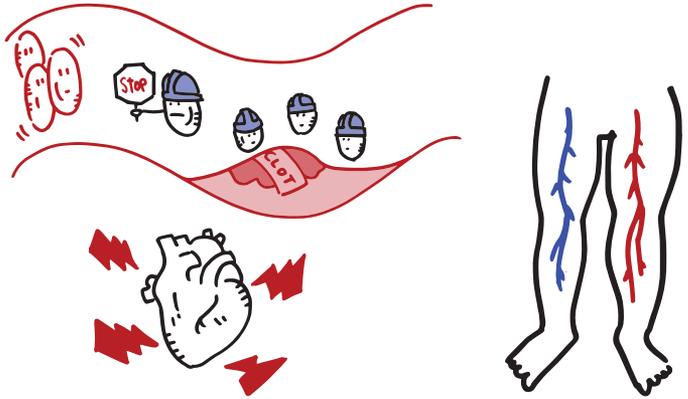
HOW SECONDARY PREVENTION  
CAN HELP KEEP YOU HEALTHY



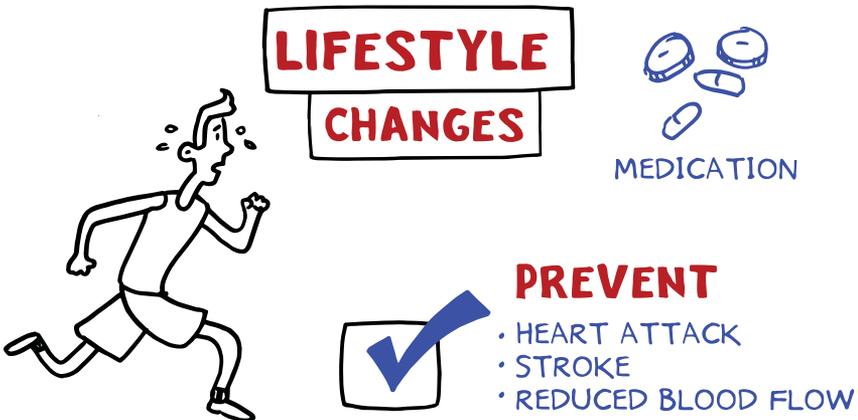
**PATIENT INFORMATION**

## WHAT IS ATHEROSCLEROSIS?

Heart attack, stroke and blockage of blood flow to the legs are caused by blood clots forming over plaques in the arteries. This is often called “hardening of the arteries.” Healthcare professionals refer to this as “atherosclerosis.” Atherosclerosis is usually the cause of coronary artery disease, a condition which affects the arteries that supply the heart with blood.

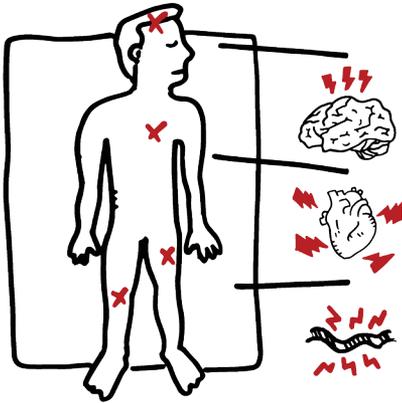


People who have atherosclerosis can make lifestyle changes and take medications that can help prevent a heart attack, stroke and reduced blood flow to the legs.



## WHAT IS SECONDARY CLOT PREVENTION?

Secondary clot prevention means preventing another heart attack or stroke after the first one has happened, or preventing worsening of blockages of the arteries.



## PREVENTING

- ANOTHER HEART ATTACK
- ANOTHER STROKE
- WORSENING OF BLOCKAGES OF THE ARTERIES

Because you already have disease in your arteries, you are at much higher risk of having a heart attack, stroke, sudden death or other serious events caused by blood clots in your arteries. (This is different from primary prevention, which means preventing these events from happening in the first place.)

People who have atherosclerosis, and have already had a heart attack or stroke, will need lifetime secondary prevention therapies to reduce the risk of a future event.



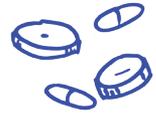
**LIFETIME**  
**SECONDARY**  
**PREVENTION**

## WHAT ARE THE APPROACHES TO SECONDARY CLOT PREVENTION?

Most people who have already had a heart attack or stroke take a single antiplatelet drug to prevent another event, usually low-dose aspirin.



- HEART ATTACK
- STROKE
- SUDDEN DEATH



People at higher risk may need more medications. For example, in the first year after a person has had a heart attack, two antiplatelet drugs are usually needed. After the first year, your doctor may suggest that you continue taking two antiplatelet drugs.



LOW-DOSE ASPIRIN

**FIRST YEAR**



**2**

ANTIPLATELET DRUGS ARE NEEDED



**AFTER FIRST YEAR**



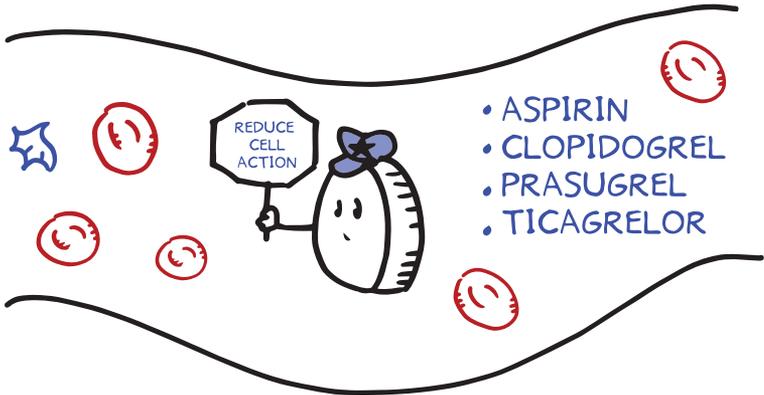
Recently, research has found that taking low-dose aspirin with rivaroxaban is a useful drug combination to prevent future heart attack, stroke and even death.

## COMMON SECONDARY PREVENTION MEDICATION REGIMENS

People at higher risk may need more medications. Your healthcare team will determine which medications are best for you. Common regimens include:

- Single antiplatelet therapy (taking only one antiplatelet medication): usually low-dose aspirin
- Dual antiplatelet therapy (taking two antiplatelet medications): low-dose aspirin plus clopidogrel, prasugrel or ticagrelor
- Combination antiplatelet and anticoagulant therapy, which is known as “dual pathway therapy” (taking an antiplatelet medication and an anticoagulant medication): low-dose aspirin plus very-low-dose rivaroxaban

**ANTIPLATELET MEDICATIONS** = REDUCE THE ACTION OF THE PLATELETS



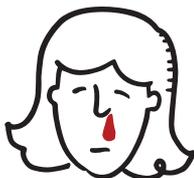
## WHAT ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?

The most important side effect of anticoagulant and antiplatelet medications you should know about is bleeding. These medications increase the risk of bleeding, which can be minor or major.



**MOST IMPORTANT**  
ANTICOAGULANT  
ANTIPLATELET  **BLEEDING**

**MINOR** = DOES NOT LAST LONG  
NOSE BLEED  
BLEEDING FROM THE GUMS



**MAJOR** = MORE SERIOUS  
RED OR BLACK BOWEL MOVEMENTS  
COUGHING OR VOMITING BRIGHT RED BLOOD



It's important to know that the majority of people taking anticoagulant medications do not have major bleeding. As well, the benefit of preventing another heart attack or stroke far outweighs the risk.



**BENEFIT** 

IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION  
**SECONDARY PREVENTION**  
REST OF YOUR LIFE



**KEY POINTS**

Your healthcare team will help you understand the best lifestyle and medication regimens for your specific situation.

If your healthcare team has prescribed secondary prevention therapy it's important to take your medications **exactly as prescribed**. Do not stop taking these medications without consulting your healthcare team.

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