

### What is clopidogrel?

Clopidogrel (Plavix) is a prescription antiplatelet medication that is given as a pill. It keeps small particles in the blood (platelets) from sticking to each other and forming clots that limit or stop the flow of blood. Clopidogrel is used to prevent heart attacks and blocked-vessel (ischemic) strokes if you have heart disease, have had a stroke, or have artery disease in your legs or arms (peripheral artery disease). It is also prescribed to people who have had a stent implanted in a blood vessel.

### Who might receive clopidogrel for stroke?

If you have a blocked-vessel (ischemic) stroke or TIA not caused by a blood clot that traveled from the heart, clopidogrel (75 mg a day) can prevent another stroke.<sup>1</sup> If you have [carotid stenting](#) to repair blockages in the arteries on your neck, you will be asked to take clopidogrel for at least 30 days after the procedure, and [aspirin](#) indefinitely, to prevent blood clots.

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If you have been receiving aspirin to prevent a second stroke or TIA and have another stroke anyway, you should be switched to the slightly more powerful clopidogrel.<sup>2, 6</sup> Clopidogrel alone is considered a safe alternative to aspirin for preventing blood clots or blocked-vessel (ischemic) strokes in women who are resistant or allergic to aspirin.

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Studies are still being conducted about whether clopidogrel, alone or in combination with aspirin, can be used as an emergency treatment for blocked-vessel (ischemic) stroke.<sup>2</sup> However, one study of people who had a TIA or stroke in the previous 3 months found that adding aspirin to clopidogrel increased the chances of bleeding and was not more effective than clopidogrel alone.

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Other options to prevent stroke in women who have had a stroke or TIA include aspirin alone and extended-release dipyridamole combined with aspirin. Extended-release dipyridamole combined with aspirin is now recommended over aspirin or clopidogrel alone.<sup>11</sup>

**Who should not receive clopidogrel?**

Women with certain medical conditions, such as stomach ulcers, that increase their susceptibility to bleeding should not take clopidogrel because of the bleeding risk.

**What are the risks of clopidogrel?**

Clopidogrel's side effects are similar to aspirin, including an increased risk of dangerous bleeding. Taking aspirin and clopidogrel together further increases this risk. Patients taking clopidogrel may also experience diarrhea and skin rashes.

**Clopidogrel Quick Reference Table**

<b>Clopidogrel</b>	
<b>Generic name:</b>	clopidogrel bisulfate
<b>Brand name:</b>	<a href="#">Plavix</a>
<b>How it is given:</b>	Pill
Doses: 75 mg and 300 mg	
<b>What it is used for:</b>	
-	To prevent repeat strokes in women who cannot take aspirin
-	To prevent a blocked-vessel stroke or heart attack in patients with a history of cardiovascular disease
<b>You should not be treated with it if:</b>	
-	You have a bleeding (hemorrhagic) stroke
-	You have received tPA in the last 24 hours
-	You are actively bleeding or have a stomach ulcer
<b>Pregnancy/nursing:</b>	The safety of this medication during pregnancy and nursing is not known

[Next: Dipyridamole](#)

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