

### **Fast Tip 16.2** Patient Teaching About Anticoagulants

Patients taking an anticoagulant should be educated about the risks associated with this medication. If these patients are injured, clotting will likely be delayed. The following precautions should be taken to avoid injury and thus clotting delays.

- Use an electric razor to avoid injury.
- Reduce intake of green leafy vegetables, green tea, hummus, and other foods that are high in vitamin K, a vitamin necessary for coagulation. These foods include cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, cereals, and soybeans.
- Watch for signs of abnormal bleeding, such as frequent bruising, bleeding gums, and black, tarry stool.
- Keep appointments to have blood drawn to monitor the effect of anticoagulants.

### **Drug Spotlight 16-1** *Aspirin (Acetylsalicylic Acid)*

<b>Classification</b>	Analgesic
<b>Definition and History</b>	A substance used for pain relief and fever reduction in the form of a powder made from willow bark as far back as 400 to 500 B.C.; patented February 27, 1900, by a German company named Bayer; Bayer was forced to give up the patent as a result of the treaty of Versailles in 1919
<b>Availability</b>	Tablets
<b>Indications</b>	Used today for pain, inflammation, and fever reduction; taken in high doses for arthritis therapy; side effects must be monitored closely; also taken in low doses to decrease the risk for heart attack and stroke in older adults
<b>Adverse Reactions/ Side Effects</b>	Stomach upset, stomach ulcerations, increased bleeding time
<b>Contraindications/ Precautions</b>	Cited as a link in Reye's syndrome in children when taken after a viral infection; therefore, aspirin is not routinely given to children

Two other types of antiplatelet medications are adenosine diphosphate (ADP) receptor blockers and glycoprotein IIb/IIIa inhibitors. ADP receptor blockers interfere with the plasma membrane of platelets that prevents clots from forming. An example of this thrombus prevention drug is clopidogrel (Plavix). These medications provide long-term prevention against clot formation.

Glycoprotein IIb/IIIa inhibitors prevent the enzyme that aggregates platelets from working. They are sometimes given before cardiac procedures to prevent clots from forming during surgery or a procedure.

Patients taking antiplatelet medications should also learn the signs of bleeding and precautions. In addition, patients should be educated to avoid foods high in vitamin K because they interfere with anticoagulant therapy (see Fast Tip 16.2).

### **Thrombolytic Medications**

If other medications fail to prevent clots from blocking blood vessels, thrombolytics can dissolve them. A clot in a vessel such as in DVT is known as a **thrombus**. A clot that breaks loose and travels is an **embolus**. A clot can form in the heart, lung, or brain or in the peripheral circulation. If a thrombus