Plate 115 Prostaglandins  Aspirin. Computer graphic of a molecule of aspirin or acetylsalicylic acid, a pain killing (analgesic), anti-inflammatory drug used to treat fever, injuries, arthritis and heart disease. The lines represent the bonds between atoms, which are shown as colour-coded spheres: carbon is green, oxygen is red and hydrogen is white. Aspirin works by blocking the action of the cyclooxygenase enzymes, which produce hormone-like prostaglandin fatty acids. Some of these prostaglandins sensitise nerve endings and dilate blood vessels after an injury. Large doses of aspirin over long periods can lead to stomach and intestinal ulcers. (With permission from Science Photo Library.)