

Consumer Brochure



A Dose of Knowledge: SAFELY MANAGING YOUR PAIN



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Experiencing pain is common and

MORE
THAN

**25 MILLION
AMERICANS**

DEAL WITH SOME LEVEL OF DAILY PAIN.¹

If you or a loved one turns to medications for pain relief, it's important to choose the right pain medication and know how to use it safely and appropriately.

There are a number of different types of medications that are used to ease pain symptoms — some are available over-the-counter (OTC) and can be purchased at your local store or drugstore, while others require a prescription from a healthcare professional and are only intended for the person with the prescription.

Types of Pain and OTC Pain Medication

Acute pain has a sudden onset, can be severe, but lasts for a short period of time — from hours to days, but no longer than six months. It can be caused by injury, illness, or surgery.

Persistent (or chronic pain) is on-going or recurrent pain that lasts beyond the usual course of acute illness or injury — several months to many years. Persistent pain doesn't mean the person is always in pain. It can be mild to severe, complex to manage, and caused by injury, arthritis, cancer, or other diseases. It can cause physical distress and seriously impact quality of life.

Choosing an OTC pain medication can seem overwhelming since there are hundreds of choices, but there are really only two main types which are defined by their active ingredient — **acetaminophen** and **nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs** (also known as NSAIDs). These two ingredients are found in pain relievers, fever reducers, sleep aids, cough & cold remedies, and medications for allergy relief.

Acetaminophen

Common Acetaminophen-Containing OTC Pain Medications

Alka-Seltzer Plus®	Excedrin®	Sudafed®	TYLENOL® Brand Products
Contac®	FeverAll®	Theraflu®	Vick's Formula 44®
Coricidin HBP®	Goody's®	Triaminic®	Vanquish®
DayQuil®	Liquiprin®	NyQuil®	Vicks®
Dimetapp®	Midol®	Panadol®	
Dristan®	Mucinex®	Robitussin®	

Common Acetaminophen-Containing Prescription Pain Medications

Endocet® (Oxycodone)	Norco® (Hydrocodone)	Ultracet® (Tramadol)
Fioricet® (Butalbital)	Percocet® (Oxycodone)	Vicodin® (Hydrocodone)
Hydrocet®	Roxicet® (Oxycodone)	Zydone®
Lortab® (Hydrocodone)		

2
MAIN
TYPES

Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory drugs

NSAIDs

Common NSAID-Containing OTC Pain Medications

Advil® (ibuprofen)	Bayer® (Ecotrin aspirin)
Advil® Dual Action with Acetaminophen	Bufferin®
Aleve® (naproxen sodium)	Excedrin®
Anacin®	Goody's®
Alka-Seltzer Plus®	Motrin® (ibuprofen)

Common NSAID-Containing Prescription Pain Medications

Anaprox® (Naproxen Sodium)	Mobic® (Meloxicam)
Celebrex® (Celecoxib)	Naprosyn® (Naproxen)
Combunox® (Oxycodone/ibuprofen)	Vicoprofen® (Hydrocodone/ibuprofen)
Indocin® (Indomethacin)	

Choosing an OTC Pain Medication

ARE THESE
SAFE?



OTC pain medications are generally effective and safe when used as directed. However, although you can buy them without a prescription, all medications can be dangerous if misused or abused.

This means that with so many options, you'll want to be sure to choose the medication that will do the best job relieving your pain and that is safest for you.

Drug Facts

Active Ingredient

Purpose

Ingredients that make the medication work

Uses

Symptoms the medication is intended to treat

Warnings

Potential side effects, when to ask a healthcare professional before taking the medication, which other medications not to take at the same time, and when to stop use

Directions

The amount (dose) of medication to take, how often to take it, and how much you can safely take in one day

Other Information

Important things to know, such as how to store the medication

Inactive Ingredients

Flavoring, preservatives, or other ingredients not meant to treat symptoms

Questions or comments?

A phone number to call the company if you have questions about the medication

The Drug Facts Label is listed on the back of the OTC medication packaging and is required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to contain specific information about ingredients, warnings, dosing directions, and other details on taking the medication safely. It's important that you can properly read and understand the Drug Facts Label so that you can safely choose and take the medication that is best for you and your symptoms.

Always read and follow the entire label for both prescription and OTC medications. Make sure you know how much medication to take, how often to take it, and whether or not the medication is safe for you.


**ALWAYS
read the
entire label!**

Taking Your OTC Pain Medications Safely

When taking
OTC Pain Medications
REMEMBER:

Tips on taking OTC pain medications:

- DO read the directions every time — even if you've used the medication before
- DO take the smallest effective dose for the shortest period of time needed
- DO talk to your healthcare professional if the medication doesn't relieve your pain
- DO stop use and ask a healthcare professional if pain gets worse or lasts for more than 10 days
- DO stop use and ask a healthcare professional if fever gets worse or last for more than three days
- DON'T take more than directed in one dose or in a 24-hour period
- DON'T take another dose too soon
- DON'T use kitchen spoons or household utensils to measure your medications
- DON'T double up by taking more than one medication with the same active ingredient at the same time



Taking more than directed can result in an overdose, and severe consequences can occur. If you or someone you know takes more than the recommended dose of any medication, call the **POISON CONTROL CENTER** at **800-222-1222** even if they feel fine, since serious consequences can occur without any symptoms.

You are at a higher risk for serious side effects such as severe liver damage if you exceed the maximum daily amount of acetaminophen, take any other blood-thinning or acetaminophen-containing drugs at the same time, consume more than three alcoholic beverages while taking the medication, or already have liver disease.

NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen and naproxen sodium) put people at a higher risk for stomach bleeding, especially people who are 60 years or older, have a history of stomach ulcers or bleeding problems, take other blood thinners or steroids, drink three or more alcohol-containing drinks per day, or who have a number of other conditions noted that can increase risk. You should not use an NSAID right before or after heart surgery. NSAIDs, except aspirin, also increase the risk of heart attack, heart failure, and stroke. These can be fatal. The risk is higher if you use more than directed or for longer than directed. Risk for these serious side effects goes up as early as the first few weeks of use and grows the longer you take them, and the more you take.² Note that if you are one of the many people that take low-dose aspirin for protection against heart attack and stroke, NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and naproxen sodium may interfere with that protective effect and you should consult your healthcare professional before use.

This is not all-inclusive and for further details refer to the “Drug Facts Label” on your medication. Other warnings that might be contained on the label include potential allergic reactions, side effects, and more. If any of the listed warnings or conditions apply to you, consult your healthcare professional before you take an NSAID.

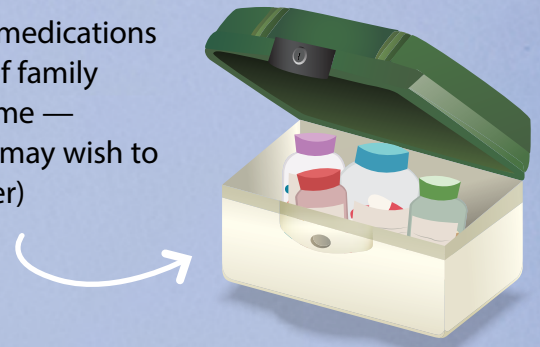
Prescription Pain Medications

Prescription pain medications, sometimes referred to as opioids, can be very effective in managing moderate to severe pain when used under the supervision of a healthcare professional; however, some can be habit-forming, or addictive if not managed under the care of a healthcare professional. Some can also be abused and are associated with accidental overdose deaths in people of all ages.



Prescription misuse and abuse often starts in the home so be sure to:

- Never share your prescription medications with anyone
 - Always keep your medications stored safely and in their original containers to avoid any confusion, and be sure to relock the safety cap after each use
 - Always store prescription pain medications up and away and out of sight of family members or visitors in your home — especially young children (you may wish to use a lockable storage container)
- Only use as prescribed by your healthcare professional
 - Make sure you understand and always follow the dosing instructions from your healthcare professional
 - Never take more than one medication with the same active ingredient at the same time, unless directed to by your healthcare professional
 - Seek advice from your healthcare professional to determine whether or not you are ready to stop using your prescription medication



Non-Drug Therapies

There are a number of non-drug therapies that can be used as alternatives or alongside your pain medications. Be sure to discuss with your healthcare professional before you start any of these.

Non-drug therapy options include but are not limited to:

- Mind-body exercises like yoga and meditation
- Acupuncture or massage
- Aromatherapy
- Regular exercise routines
- Deep breathing
- Physical therapy
- Pet therapy
- Pain management devices

Storing Your Medications

It's important to store your medications properly to keep important information nearby, keep them from going bad, reduce confusion, and reduce the chances of accidental or intentional misuse:

- Keep your medications in their original container or packaging
- Avoid mixing multiple medications in the same container
- Store your medications somewhere cool and dry
- Store your medications up and away and out of sight — maybe on the top shelf of a cabinet or hall closet
- Never leave medications out on a table, countertop, sink, or any spot that is easy for children to access
- Consider storing medications in a lockable storage container
- Keep any purses, bags, and coats that contain medications up and away, and out of reach at home and when visiting others
- Relock safety caps tightly



A study found that in **over a third of cases** where a **child got into someone's medication** and ended up in the emergency room, that medication belonged to a **grandparent**³

Keeping Track of Your Medications

Some people may prefer writing down dosing instructions and timing and keeping it in a familiar place. A tracker tool (like the one at the end of this brochure) may be helpful. Others may prefer setting an alarm on their phones or using an app to give them reminders.

Whatever you use to keep track, make sure you share the information with all members of your healthcare team, including your pharmacist, so that everyone is on the same page.



Disposing of Medications

More than 40% of sold medications are believed to end up unused.⁴ One way to help reduce this waste is to talk to your healthcare professional and make sure you aren't getting prescribed more than you actually need. Also stay on top of auto refills, including those on-line, in case you no longer need to take those medications.

The best way to dispose of most types of unused, unwanted, or expired medications (both prescription and over-the-counter) is to drop off the medication at a drug take back site, location, or program promptly. Check with your community and local drug stores for drop off sites. You can go to www.dea.gov or <https://safe.pharmacy/drug-disposal> to find a site near you.

If you cannot get to a take back location promptly, check to see if your medication is on the FDA Flush List.

Medications on this list are those

- 1) with high abuse and/or misuse potential and
- 2) that can result in death from just one dose if taken inappropriately.

Flushing those medications down the toilet is your best option if you cannot get to a drug take back site. However, don't flush your medication unless it is on the Flush List.

If your medication is not on the Flush List, the simplest way to dispose of it is to throw it away in three easy steps: MIX, SEAL, & THROW AWAY:

DISPOSAL IN 3 SIMPLE STEPS

#1 MIX Remove the medication from its original container and mix it with something unappealing like kitty litter, dirt, or coffee grounds. That way if someone finds the medication, they're less likely to recognize it or want to take it.

#2 SEAL Make sure that you seal the medication in a container that prevents leaking — like a plastic sandwich bag or food container with a lid.

#3 THROW AWAY Now you can throw it away in the garbage and recycle the original container once you've destroyed any personal information.



Additional Resources

The following organizations and campaigns have great resources on medication safety:

- Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition www.knowyourdose.org
- Alliance for Aging Research www.agingresearch.org/medication-safety
- American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) www.aapcc.org
- BeMedWise www.bemedwise.org
- Get Relief Responsibly www.getreliefresponsibly.com
- Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org
- Up and Away and Out of Sight www.upandaway.org

Medication Tracker Tool

Write down your prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and supplements in the medication tracker below. Be sure to keep it up to date, carry it with you, and share it with your healthcare professionals. Always take your medication as directed.

MY MEDICATION/SUPPLEMENT


MEDICATION (Active Ingredient)	WHY I TAKE IT	START DATE	REFILL DATE	HOW MUCH DO I TAKE?	WHEN DO I TAKE IT?





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Many thanks to our expert reviewers:

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Produced in partnership with



¹ Nahin, R. 2015. Estimates of Pain Prevalence and Severity in Older Adults: United States, 2012. *J Pain* 16(8):769-80.

² U.S. Food & Drug Administration. July 9, 2015. *FDA Drug Safety Communication: FDA strengthens warning that non-aspirin nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can cause heart attacks or strokes*. Available at www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-drug-safety-communication-fda-strengthens-warning-non-aspirin-nonsteroidal-anti-inflammatory. Last accessed 6/1/21.

³ Safe Kids Worldwide. 2014. *Every 8 Minutes a Child goes to an Emergency Room for Medicine Poisoning*. Available at www.safekids.org/press-release/every-8-minutes-child-goes-emergency-room-medicine-poisoning. Last accessed 6/1/21.

⁴ Filippis, P, B Caprariis, M Scarsella, and N Verdone. 2012. Energy Recovery from Unused and Expired Medications. *In Waste Management and the Environment VI* 163: 125-33. Southampton: WIT Press.