

READ THE LABEL!

A PATIENT GUIDE TO ACETAMINOPHEN SAFETY FOR ADULTS



Acetaminophen is often in the news. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and makers of acetaminophen products have made changes to the products to prevent unintentional overdoses. Learn more about acetaminophen to be safe when taking this medicine.

What is acetaminophen?

Acetaminophen is a pain reliever and fever reducer. It is listed on the product or prescription label as acetaminophen or apap.

What products may contain acetaminophen?

This list is not complete and some products listed may have versions that do not contain acetaminophen. Check the ingredient label if you aren't sure.

Over-the-counter products

Actifed®
Anacin®
Benadryl®
Cepacol®
Contac®
Coricidin®
Dayquil®
Dimetapp®
Excedrin®
Midol®

Nyquil®
Sudafed®
Theraflu®
Triaminic®
Tylenol® Brand Products
Zicam®

Prescription products

Darvocet®
Endocet®
Fioricet®
Hydrocet®
Lortab®
Percocet®
Ultracet®
Vicodin®
Zydone®

Is it safe to take acetaminophen?
See the other side for details.



For More Information:

www.safermaryland.org

Is it safe to take acetaminophen?

Yes, acetaminophen is a safe medicine. Before taking acetaminophen, you should:

- Read the label before taking medicine, every time.
- Take only one medicine containing acetaminophen at a time. (Look at the list shown here or ask your pharmacist to know if a product contains acetaminophen.)
- Make sure you do not take more than the maximum daily dose on the label. If the recommended dose does not help, see your doctor.
- If you drink alcohol regularly, ask your doctor if acetaminophen is safe for you.

Note: This information is for adults. To learn more about acetaminophen safety in children, ask your child's doctor. Or call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

Why is acetaminophen dangerous?

When it is used correctly, acetaminophen is very safe. The drug becomes dangerous when you take more than you should. This can happen if pain does not go away with a single dose, so you take more medicine. Or, it can happen if you take two medicines together and they both contain acetaminophen. You can take too much all at once or over a period of time. If you are using acetaminophen regularly, be sure to tell your doctor. You may be more likely to have side effects if you use alcohol, have liver damage, or take other medicines which could affect liver function.

When you take too much acetaminophen, it can cause liver damage. In fact, acetaminophen overdose is an important cause of liver failure and liver transplants in the United States.

Your doctor can order blood tests to check the health of your liver. Liver problems can be caused by reasons other than acetaminophen. Your doctor will help find the cause of any problems.

What are the symptoms of acetaminophen overdose?

Usually there are no early symptoms with taking too much acetaminophen over time. Symptoms usually develop later when the liver has been damaged. Nausea or vomiting can occur when large doses of acetaminophen are taken at one time.

How should acetaminophen overdose be treated?

As soon as you know you have taken too much acetaminophen, call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 or call your doctor. Poison centers are experts in handling acetaminophen overdoses. They can help decide if the amount taken could be dangerous. The poison center will work with your health care providers to develop a plan based on the amount taken and laboratory results of a blood sample.

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