

OTC acetaminophen: Temporary pain and fever relief

Acetaminophen is called an internal analgesic and is used for temporary fever and pain relief. It can be available in both over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription strength. (On some prescription labels, it may be abbreviated as APAP. It will never be abbreviated and will always say acetaminophen on an OTC Drug Facts label.) It can be found in single-ingredient medicines as well as in multi-symptom relief or combination cough and cold or flu remedies. It is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and is safe and effective when used according to label instructions.

Here is some information that might help you safely use acetaminophen.

| <i>Tips for safe use:</i> | <i>Ask a healthcare professional before using if:</i> | <i>Stop use and contact a doctor if:</i> | <i>Do not use:</i> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and follow label directions. • Do not take more than the label says or for longer than the label says. Taking too much acetaminophen can lead to an overdose and liver damage. • Check with a healthcare professional before using more than one internal analgesic product at the same time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are pregnant or breastfeeding. • You have liver disease. • You are taking the blood thinning drug, warfarin. • You drink three or more alcoholic drinks a day. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You think you have taken or given too much acetaminophen. • Fever gets worse or lasts more than three days, or if pain gets worse or lasts more than 10 days. • New symptoms occur or redness or swelling is present. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With any other acetaminophen-containing medicine, prescription or OTC. (Remember, while acetaminophen may be written as “APAP” on prescription labels, it is the same ingredient.) Taking too much acetaminophen can lead to an overdose and may cause liver damage. • If tamper-prevention features—such as seals, locks, and films—are not clear or seem broken. |

As always, if you have any questions about any medicine you are taking or if you have any unexpected side effects, talk to a healthcare professional. And keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.