



# FROM THE DESK OF THE DDSN MEDICAL CONSULTANT

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Acetaminophen

(Tylenol, Anacin,  
Tempra,  
Paracetamol or  
APAP)

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EXTRANET:

<http://web.ddsn.sc.gov>



## HEALTH INFORMATION UPDATE

Notes for staff, consumers and members of the SCDDSN Community

### Acetaminophen:

We use it often for ourselves and the people we care for. Please check out some of this information to be safe when you use it..

- Useful medication for pain relief and fever reduction
- Can use for
  - Cold symptom relief
  - Headaches
  - Toothaches
  - Menstrual pain
  - Osteoarthritis
- To help reduce cold symptoms. It is often in medications that include antihistamines, decongestants or antitussives (reduce cough)
- For more severe pain it can be added to more powerful painkillers like codeine or oxycodone and is in for example Tylenol 1,2,3 or 4 and Percocet and Vicodin

Acetaminophen is a useful and safe medication if used carefully. However, it can cause problems so please use it according to directions.

- 1) Works best if given early for pain reduction
- 2) Do not use longer than 5 days for adults and 3 days for children without advice from your health clinician.
- 3) If used for fever do not use for more than 3 days without advice. If fever gets worse ask for advice.
- 4) Please use only recommended doses.

Acetaminophen is the most common cause for ER visits for drug overdoses in the US.

It is safe at usual doses:

- Less than 1,000mg (1 Gram) / dose
- Less than 4,000mg (4 Grams) / day

However, even small overdoses can be fatal. The FDA is asking manufacturers to reduce pill sizes to make it less likely that people will take too much.

**PLEASE:** Do not take more than 4,000 mg (4 Grams) per day. This means no more than 8 x 500 mg tabs or 6 x 650 mg tabs per day

**BUT ALSO:** If you have liver disease or drink a lot of alcohol, reduce the dose.

Check ALL MEDICINES FOR THE TOTAL ACETAMINOPHEN you take each day.

- Check all painkillers
- Check all fever reducers
- Check all cold medicines

And add them all to see the total dose each day of acetaminophen.

**PLEASE FOR CHILDREN:**

- There is now a single concentration available (160 mg/5 ml) of acetaminophen
- Please follow directions for age and weight on the label
- Do not use under the age of 12 weeks – see a doctor for fever
- Measuring a dose please use a syringe or dropper or measuring spoon (ordinary teaspoons may be 3 mls to 8 mls – standard measuring teaspoon should be 5 mls)

See [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org) under symptom checks and acetaminophen dosage.

Acetaminophen is toxic for cats. Do not give it to cats.

Acetaminophen overdose will cause:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Tiredness
- Jaundice (yellowing skin)
- Increased sweating
- Diarrhea and
- Abdominal pain

Call Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 or go to the Emergency Room. Treatment helps best early so if there is a risk of overdose, ask for advice.