

# Pain and Fever Relief

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

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## Acetaminophen/APAP/Paracetamol (Tylenol)

### What is it?

Medication that is both a fever reducer and pain reliever but not an anti-inflammatory.

### How do you take it?

**Regular strength (325 mg each tablet):** 2 tabs every 4-6 hours as needed with no more than 10 tablets per day (3250 mg).

**Extra strength (500 mg each tablet):** 2 tabs every 6 hours as needed with no more than 6 tablets per day (3000 mg).

- Does not need to be taken with food
- Easy on the stomach, so it is helpful when there are symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- No effect on platelet function (blood clotting) so it is less likely to cause bleeding when used for pain after surgery, for example.
- **It is very important not to exceed the recommended dosage of Tylenol (acetaminophen), as it can be toxic to the liver.**
- If you are taking other OTC combination products which contain acetaminophen (for example, Dayquil or Nyquil) be sure to read the labels to avoid excessive dosing.
- Prescription pain relievers may also contain Tylenol (acetaminophen), such as Percocet, Vicodin, Tylenol with codeine.

It is best to take only 1 medicine containing acetaminophen at a time to avoid overdosing.

## Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, Nuprin)

### What is it?

Medication that is fever reducer, pain reliever and anti-inflammatory.

### How do you take it?

**Over the counter strength Ibuprofen (200 mg each tablet):** 2 tabs every 4-6 hours as needed with food or 3 tabs every 6 hours, with food, no more than 2400 mg per day.

**Prescription strength Ibuprofen:** one 600 mg tablet three times daily with food OR one 800 mg tablet three times daily with food.

- Take with food as may be irritating to the stomach, and discontinue if stomach pain develops.
- Can sometimes affect platelet function (blood clotting).
- Do not exceed the maximum daily dosing per day.
- It may be more effective than Tylenol for muscle aches and orthopedic injuries.
- In order to reduce inflammation it may be necessary to use it consistently for several days.
- It should be avoided in individuals with kidney problems.
- Many over-the-counter combination products also contain ibuprofen (for example, Advil Cold and Sinus, or Motrin PM), so be sure you read labels to avoid an overdose.

## Alternating Tylenol and Ibuprofen

For intense pain and high fever, both Tylenol and Ibuprofen can be taken. They have a different chemical composition and may give more relief together than can be provided using either alone.

How to alternate Ibuprofen and Tylenol:

- With food, take two ibuprofen 200 mg tablets and then 2-3 hours later, if fever and pain is not relieved, take two regular strength Tylenol 325 mg tablets.
- Two-three hours later, if fever and/or pain persist, take two more ibuprofen tablets (200 mg each).
- You can continue to alternate Ibuprofen and Tylenol, up to the maximum doses of each medicine, but do not exceed the maximum dose of each.
- Be sure to maintain proper dosing intervals between successive doses of the same medication (at least 4 hours).

If you have not eaten or have an upset stomach, start with tylenol then add ibuprofen once you can eat according to the description above.

### Fahrenheit/Celsius

#### Conversion Scale

98.6 F = 37.0 C

100 F = 37.7 C

101 F = 38.2 C

102 F = 38.9 C

103 F = 39.4 C

104 F = 39.9 C

105 F = 40.5 C