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U.S. Health Coalition Issues Essential Medicine Safety Tips for Upcoming Cold and Flu Season

Always "Double Check; Don't Double Up" When Treating Symptoms

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As the countdown to cold and flu season begins, consumers are getting flu shots and increasing their purchases of cold and flu medicines. The [Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition](#) is issuing a safety message to consumers, reminding them to double check their medicine labels to avoid doubling up on medicines with acetaminophen when treating symptoms during the upcoming cold and flu season.

Acetaminophen is the most common drug ingredient in America. It is found in more than 600 different medicines, including prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers, fever reducers, sleep aids and numerous medicines for cough, cold and flu. It is safe and effective when used as directed, but there is a limit to how much can be taken in one day. Taking more than directed is an overdose and can lead to liver damage.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that cold and flu season will begin to pick up in October and [peak between January and March](#). Each year, Americans catch approximately 1 billion colds, and seven in 10 consumers will turn to OTC medicines to treat symptoms. The Coalition advises cold and flu sufferers to follow four key acetaminophen safety steps when using these medicines:

1. Always read and follow the medicine label.
2. **Know if medicines contain acetaminophen**, which is in bold type or highlighted in the "active ingredients" section of OTC medicine labels and sometimes listed as "APAP" or "acetam" on prescription labels.
3. Never take two medicines that contain acetaminophen at the same time.
4. Ask your healthcare provider or a pharmacist if you have questions about dosing instructions or medicines that contain acetaminophen.

The Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition, a diverse group of leading health, healthcare provider and consumer organizations, formed the [Know Your Dose campaign](#) to educate consumers about safe acetaminophen use in order to prevent liver damage.

Cold And Flu Season Is Here
DOUBLE CHECK YOUR MEDICINE LABELS. DON'T DOUBLE UP ON ACETAMINOPHEN.

Americans catch **1 BILLION** colds per year

7 in 10 Americans use over-the-counter medicines to treat cold and flu symptoms each year*

MORE THAN 600 over-the-counter and prescription medicines contain acetaminophen, including many for cold and flu symptoms†

NEVER TAKE 2 medicines that contain acetaminophen at the same time

CHOOSE ONE

TAKING MORE ACETAMINOPHEN THAN DIRECTED IS AN OVERDOSE AND CAN LEAD TO LIVER DAMAGE.

KnowYourDose.org
Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition

The Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition is a diverse group of leading health, healthcare provider and consumer organizations committed to ensuring that acetaminophen is used safely.

* <http://www.cdc.gov/medlineplus/commcold.html>
† Symphony IRI Group Panel Report, based on data collected in 2011
‡ <http://generalresponsibility.com/acetaminophen/faq.php>