

Acetaminophen:

Do you know how to take it safely?



Acetaminophen is found in more than 600 different prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. These include pain relievers, fever reducers, cough, cold, and allergy medicines, as well as sleep aids. Acetaminophen is the most common drug ingredient in America.

When you take acetaminophen as directed, it is safe and effective. But there is a limit to how much you can take in one day. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has set a maximum daily limit of 4,000 milligrams (mg) in a 24-hour period. **Taking more acetaminophen than directed is an overdose and can lead to liver damage.**

Follow these three steps to help you take acetaminophen safely:

- ▶ **Always read and follow the label.**
Always read the label before taking any medicine. Never take more acetaminophen than directed.
- ▶ **Know if your medicines contain acetaminophen.**
You need to know if acetaminophen is in the medicines you take so you can avoid taking too much. Here's how to find out:

If you're taking an OTC medicine, look for the word "acetaminophen" on the front of the package or highlighted in yellow on the **Drug Facts** label.

Drug Facts	
Active ingredient (in each caplet)	Purpose
Acetaminophen XXX mg	Pain reliever/fever reducer

For prescription medicine, look for the word "acetaminophen" or a shorter version such as "APAP" or "acetam" on the label.

- ▶ **Only take one medicine with acetaminophen at a time.**
Don't take two or more medicines that contain acetaminophen at the same time. Taking too much acetaminophen can cause liver damage.

For more information, talk to your healthcare provider or visit: