

Make the right choice for you

OTC pain reliever differences could matter to your health

1 Check the active ingredient


They may treat the same symptoms, but they work differently in your body.

2 Consult the checklist

Not all pain relievers are appropriate for everyone.

Acetaminophen for example, **Tylenol**®

- Do you:
- drink 3 or more alcoholic beverages every day?
 - have liver disease?
 - take the blood thinning drug warfarin?
 - take prescription medicines containing acetaminophen?
 - take other OTC medicines containing acetaminophen, including cough and cold or allergy products, sleep aids, and pain relievers?
 - have an allergy to acetaminophen?

 *If you checked any of these boxes, talk to your healthcare professional before taking OTC acetaminophen, because other pain relievers may be more appropriate for you.*

Acetaminophen
4,000 mg

NSAIDs = Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs

Ibuprofen for example, **Motrin**® IB, **Advil**®

- Do you:
- take aspirin to protect against heart attack or stroke?
 - have heart surgery scheduled or recently had heart surgery?

Naproxen sodium for example, **Aleve**®


- Do you:
- have heart surgery scheduled or recently had heart surgery?

Aspirin for example, **Bayer**® **Extra Strength**

- Do you:
- take prescription medicines for gout, diabetes, or arthritis?

- Do you:
- have a history of stomach bleeding or stomach ulcers?
 - have a history of stomach problems, such as heartburn?
 - have kidney disease?
 - have heart disease or have had a stroke?
 - have high blood pressure?
 - have liver cirrhosis?
 - have asthma?
 - drink 3 or more alcoholic beverages every day?
 - take prescription medicines, such as NSAIDs, diuretics, or blood thinning drugs (anticoagulants)?
 - take other OTC medicines containing NSAIDs, including cough and cold or allergy products, sleep aids, and pain relievers?
 - take steroids or have a condition that requires long-term steroid use?
 - have an allergy to aspirin or ever had an allergic reaction or side effects from taking pain relievers?

- Are you:
- age 60 or older?

 *If you checked any of these boxes, talk to your healthcare professional before taking an OTC NSAID, such as ibuprofen, naproxen sodium, or aspirin, because other pain relievers may be more appropriate for you.*

Ibuprofen **Naproxen sodium** **Aspirin**
1,200 mg **660 mg** **4,000 mg**

For your safety, do not take more than this amount in 24 hours.


Directions are not just suggestions—they are meant to be followed.
It is not safe to apply the dosing directions of one pain reliever to another.

IMPORTANT

Different ingredients have different warnings. For complete warnings and information, check the Drug Facts label on your medicine cartons.

3 Know the OTC daily limit

4 Follow the directions

 If you take aspirin to help protect against heart attack or stroke, **taking ibuprofen may decrease that heart health benefit**

See back for common over-the-counter (OTC) medicine brands and prescription medicines that contain acetaminophen and NSAIDs 

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Check your medicines

Take **ONLY 1** medicine that contains **acetaminophen** at a time

Why?

- If you take more than 1 medicine that contains acetaminophen at a time, it increases your chance of taking too much (more than 4,000 mg in 24 hours), and that could harm your liver

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine brands with products that contain **acetaminophen**

- Tylenol®
- NyQuil®/DayQuil®
- Excedrin®
- Alka-Seltzer Plus®
- Mucinex®
- Robitussin®
- Goody's®

MORE THAN
500
medicines contain
acetaminophen

Many **prescription** medicines contain **acetaminophen**, such as

- Vicodin®, Norco®, Lortab® (Hydrocodone)
- Percocet®, Endocet®, Roxicet (Oxycodone)
- Tylenol® with Codeine
- Fioricet® (Butalbital)
- Ultracet® (Tramadol)

Take **ONLY 1** medicine that contains an **NSAID*** at a time

Why?

- If you take more than 1 medicine that contains an NSAID, it increases the risk of stomach bleeding
- If you take aspirin to help protect against heart attack or stroke, taking ibuprofen may decrease that heart health benefit
- Non-aspirin NSAIDs (for example, ibuprofen or naproxen sodium) increase the risk of heart attack, heart failure, and stroke. This risk is higher if you use more than directed or longer than directed.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine brands with products that contain an **NSAID** (ibuprofen, naproxen sodium, or aspirin)

- Advil®
- Aleve®
- Bayer®
- Motrin®
- Excedrin®
- Alka-Seltzer Plus®
- Goody's®

MORE THAN
900
medicines contain
an NSAID

Many **prescription** medicines contain an **NSAID**, such as

- Vicoprofen® (Hydrocodone)
- Combunox® (Oxycodone)
- Mobic® (Meloxicam)
- Naprosyn® (Naproxen)
- Anaprox® (Naproxen sodium)
- Celebrex® (Celecoxib)

*Nonsteroidal
anti-inflammatory drug

This is not a complete list of OTC and prescription brands with products that contain acetaminophen or an NSAID. Check your medicine label. If you are unsure, ask your healthcare professional.



Find dosage charts, quizzes, and videos at
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