

A Generalist's Perspective on OTC Analgesia

The right over-the-counter (OTC) analgesic recommendation matters to your patients.

The following **key steps** can help healthcare providers (HCPs) ensure that an appropriate OTC analgesic choice is identified for each patient and can encourage patients to use their medication safely:

1 Evaluate patients for coexisting medical conditions.

Cardiovascular (CV) disease:

When taken regularly, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can increase CV risks, and these risks may be even greater in patients with known CV disease.¹ NSAIDs have also been linked to an increase in systolic blood pressure.²

Gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding:

NSAIDs may promote serious GI bleeding, and this risk may be even greater in patients with a history of stomach ulcers or bleeding problems or in individuals who consume 3 or more alcoholic drinks every day while using an NSAID.³

Liver disease:

Careful consideration should be given when recommending acetaminophen to patients with liver disease or individuals who consume 3 or more alcoholic drinks every day while using acetaminophen.⁴

Asthma, kidney problems, and diabetes:

NSAIDs may exacerbate asthma and kidney problems.^{5,6} Careful consideration should be given when recommending an NSAID to patients with diabetes, who may have an increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease.⁷

2 Conduct a thorough medication reconciliation.

To avoid potential adverse events, HCPs should determine whether patients are taking any medications or health products before recommending an OTC analgesic. Patients do not always mention that they are taking:

Medications prescribed by other HCPs
Other OTC medications

Vitamins
Supplements

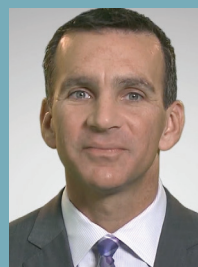
Minerals
Natural health products

The risks associated with the use of OTC analgesics and concurrent medications must be considered.

3 Educate patients on the safe use of OTC analgesics.

- ✓ Explain the importance of disclosing all medications and health products used.
- ✓ Describe why a particular analgesic is being recommended for the patient.
- ✓ Increase awareness of the hundreds of medications that contain acetaminophen or NSAIDs.
- ✓ Review the appropriate maximum daily dose of the recommended OTC analgesic.
- ✓ Discuss how to read medication labels to identify potential OTC and prescription interactions.

“With enhanced patient communication and education around OTC analgesics, providers can help patients manage their pain both effectively and safely.”



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References

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For more information on safety considerations for OTC analgesic recommendations, visit the GET RELIEF RESPONSIBLY® Professional Resource Center at **GetReliefResponsiblyProfessional.com**

Additional patient educational resources are available at **GetReliefResponsibly.com**