

# Let's Talk About Acetaminophen

Acetaminophen is widely used in Canada to treat pain and fever. More than 700 over-the-counter and prescription medicines contain acetaminophen, including medications to treat muscle pain, allergies, cold and flu, and menstrual symptoms.

Acetaminophen is safe and effective when used as directed, but there is a limit to how much you can take in one day. Taking more than the recommended dose can cause severe or even fatal liver damage.

There are a number of steps you can follow to take acetaminophen safely:



## Read the label

- Always read the product label carefully and follow the instructions.
- Know if the product contains acetaminophen.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions.



## Safe Use

- Take only one medication at a time that contains acetaminophen.
- Avoid taking the next dose too soon.
- Do not take more than the recommended amount at one time.

## DYK

DID YOU KNOW?

Acetaminophen is broken down by the liver? If you take too much—in one day or over several days—it can build up in your liver and become toxic.



## DYK

DID YOU KNOW?

Prolonged use, even at the recommended dose, also increases the risk of liver problems?

## Know Your Dose

- Know the amount of acetaminophen you can take at one time.
- Know how often you can take the product and how many hours to wait before taking another dose.
- Always start with the lowest recommended dose.
- Keep track of how much you take daily.
- Taking more than the recommended dose will not provide more or faster relief.
- If you have liver disease or drink 3 or more alcoholic drinks every day, the maximum amount you can safely take may be less than what is listed on the product label.
- **Never take more than the maximum daily dose of 4,000 mg.**



**8** extra strength tablets  
of 500 mg

or



**12** regular strength tablets  
of 325 mg



If you take too much acetaminophen you could have liver damage and not be aware of it. Symptoms may not appear for many hours following an overdose. Call your local poison control centre immediately if you have taken more than the maximum daily dose.

## DYK

DID YOU KNOW?

In Canada there are approximately 700 hospitalizations each year for accidental overdoses involving acetaminophen?

## DYK

DID YOU KNOW?

Acetaminophen overdose is a leading cause of acute liver failure in Canada?