BEFORE YOU COMBINE

Your OTC Pain Medication Safety Checklist

U.S. PAIN FOUNDATION



Taking more than one medication for pain? Before adding an over-the-counter (OTC) pain reliever, make sure you know what's in it and how it may affect the medications you're already using.

FOUR THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE YOU TAKE AN OTC

☐	**1. Know the active ingredients.**	Have I checked the Drug Facts label to see what's in this medication?
☐	**2. Check for duplicate ingredients.**	Am I already taking the same active ingredient in another medication, or another medication in the same drug class? Have I checked my prescription, OTC, cold, flu, allergy, and combination products?
☐	**3. Verify the timing and dose.**	Do I know when I last took each medication, how much I took, and when the next dose is permitted?
☐	**4. Consider interactions and health conditions**	Could this medication interact with another treatment or medication? Do I have a condition that requires extra caution, such as kidney disease, liver disease, high blood pressure, or a bleeding disorder?

A FEW IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Different brands can contain the same ingredient. **Acetaminophen**, for example, is found in many prescription and OTC products, not just Tylenol. Taking multiple products containing the same active ingredient can lead to accidentally taking too much of it.

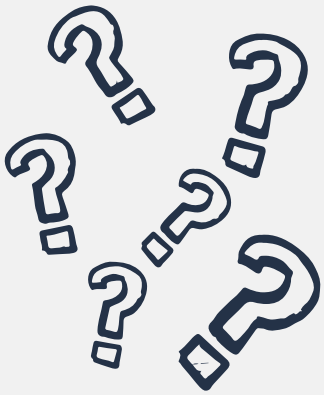
Combination products contain more than one active ingredient. Some OTC pain relievers combine **acetaminophen** with **ibuprofen** or **naproxen sodium** in a single product. Before adding another medication, check all active ingredients to avoid accidental duplication or potentially unsafe combinations.

Not all pain relievers should be combined. **Ibuprofen** (such as Advil), **naproxen sodium** (such as Aleve), **aspirin** (such as Bayer Aspirin), and **magnesium salicylate** (such as Doan's) are oral NSAIDs. **Diclofenac sodium** (such as Voltaren) is also an NSAID that is available as a topical gel. Taking multiple NSAIDs at the same time, unless specifically directed by a healthcare professional, can increase serious side effects and risks. If you take prescribed low-dose aspirin, ask before adding another NSAID, and don't stop your aspirin without medical guidance.

A FEW IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Topical products count, too. Pain-relief gels, creams, patches, and liquids contain active ingredients that may interact with other treatments or require special precautions. Include them when reviewing your medications with your pharmacist or healthcare provider.

Don’t take more medication if it isn’t helping. If you're following the directions and still experiencing pain, talk with your healthcare provider about your treatment options rather than exceeding the recommended dose.



STILL NOT SURE?

Before adding another medication, ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider: **"Can I safely take this with everything else I'm using?"** Read the active ingredients and compare them with medications you’re already taking for pain.

Bring your medication list, including prescriptions, OTC products, and supplements.

Know what you’re taking. Know what to ask. Know your options for pain relief.



This content is intended for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Always follow the Drug Facts label and consult your healthcare provider or pharmacist with questions about medication use.