



Canadian Liver Foundation
Fondation canadienne du foie

Bringing liver research to life
Donner vie à la recherche sur le foie

Acetaminophen

Acetaminophen is the active ingredient in Tylenol®, one of the most popular over the counter pain relievers. It is used in a variety of conditions to relieve headaches, muscle and joint pain, pain during menstruation, and to reduce fever. Many people may not realize that aside from Tylenol® there are more than 200 other products that contain acetaminophen including many over the counter cough and cold products, and some muscle relaxants.

All drugs, even over the counter ones, have potentially harmful side effects. Since many drugs, including acetaminophen, have to be processed by the liver, people with liver disease have to be especially careful about what and how much medication they take.

It is very important to speak to your doctor about the risks and benefits of all medications before making the decision to take them.

Here are a few simple guidelines to follow when deciding how and when to use products with acetaminophen:

- ALWAYS read the instructions, and NEVER take more than the recommended dose. Taking any more than is recommended can be harmful to the liver. Always follow your doctor recommended dose.
- NEVER mix Tylenol® or other acetaminophen products with alcohol. People who drink alcohol regularly are cautioned to avoid use of acetaminophen, and to consult their doctor about proper use.
- Be careful about mixing Tylenol® with other products that contain acetaminophen. By taking more than one product containing acetaminophen at a time, you may accidentally take more acetaminophen than is safe.
- If you take other medications, consult your doctor or pharmacist about possible drug interactions.
- Consult with your doctor about taking acetaminophen if you have liver disease.
- Take Tylenol® and all other pain relievers only when really necessary.

This information is current for April 2013.