



Pain Relievers & Your Liver **Information for Injection Drug Users**

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Many medications, even those that you can buy over the counter, are toxic to your liver, especially if you take them in high doses. Here are some things to know if you take pain relievers, especially if you have **Hepatitis B or C**:

As a general rule, it is best not to take more than 4 pills of pain relievers per day.

More is not necessarily better. You might think, if 2 pills helps my headache a little, 6 will help a lot!! Not necessarily so. Sometimes, taking a higher dose helps the medicine last longer or work better, but there is a limit. Beyond that limit, you just get more side effects. People taking care of their livers should try to get away with the least amount of medicine possible.

Toxic effects build up over time. For a couple of days, taking more than 4 a day is probably OK. But even 4 a day could cause problems if you took them every day for weeks or months at a time. If you need to take pain medications every day for more than a few days, talk to a health care provider about what you're taking, and alternatives to pills for pain (like acupuncture).

Guidelines for common over the counter and prescription medications:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Excedrine)

It is best not to exceed 1300 mg per day, that's about 4 pills.

Aspirin (Bayer, Buffrin, Excedrine).

It is best not to exceed 1500 mg per day, that's about 4 pills.

Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, Midol).

It is best not to exceed 1300 mg per day, that's about 3 pills.

Naprosen (Aleve, Naproxen).

It is best not to exceed 1300 mg per day, that's about 3 pills.

Prescription pain killers (Vicodin, Ty-Co's, Percocet, Percodan).

In addition to codeine and other opiates, these pills also contain acetaminophen or aspirin. It is best not to exceed 2 pills/day for Vicodin, about 4 pills/day for Ty-Co's, Percocet and Percodan.