Before using any medicine, remember to think **SAFER.**

Speak up

Ask questions

Find the facts

Evaluate your choices

Read the label

New York State Department of Health

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The best way to take your over-the-counter pain reliever?

SERIOUSLY.

Over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers/fever reducers (the kind you can buy without a prescription) are safe and effective when used as directed. However, they can cause serious problems when used by people with certain conditions or taking specific medicines. They can also cause problems in people who take too much, or use them for a longer period of time than the product's *Drug Facts* label recommends. That is why it is important to follow label directions carefully. If you have questions, talk to a pharmacist or health care professional.

What are pain relievers/fever reducers?

There are two categories of over-the-counter pain relievers/fever reducers: acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Acetaminophen is used to relieve headaches, muscle aches and fever. It is also found in many other medicines, such as cough syrup and cold and sinus medicines. OTC NSAIDs are used to help relieve pain and reduce fever. NSAIDs include aspirin, naproxen, ketoprofen and ibuprofen, and are also found in many medicines taken for colds, sinus pressure and allergies.

Drug Facts

Active ingredient (in each tablet) **Purposes**

Ibuprofen 200 mg .....Pain reliever/Fever reducer

Uses

- temporarily relieves minor aches and pains due to:
  - headache
  - backache
  - the common cold
  - minor pain of arthritis
  - toothache
  - menstrual cramps
  - muscular aches
- temporarily reduces fever

Warnings

Allergy alert: Ibuprofen may cause a severe allergic reaction which may include:

- hives
- facial swelling
- asthma (wheezing)
- shock

Stomach bleeding warning: Taking more than recommended may cause stomach bleeding.

Alcohol warning: If you consume 3 or more alcoholic drinks every day, ask your doctor whether you should take ibuprofen or other pain relievers/fever reducers. Ibuprofen may cause stomach bleeding.

Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to any other pain reliever/fever reducer

Drug Facts

Active ingredient (in each caplet) **Purposes**

Aspirin 500 mg.....Pain reliever/fever reducer

Uses for the temporary relief of:

- headache
- pain and fever of colds
- muscle pain
- menstrual pain
- toothache
- minor pain of arthritis

Warnings

Reye's syndrome: Children and teenagers should not use this medicine for chicken pox or flu symptoms before a doctor is consulted about Reye's syndrome, a rare but serious illness reported to be

Drug Facts

Active ingredient (in each caplet) **Purposes**

Naproxen sodium 220 mg (naproxen 200 mg).....Pain reliever/fever reducer

Uses

- temporarily relieves minor aches and pains due to:
  - headache
  - muscular aches
  - minor pain of arthritis

How do I use pain relievers/fever reducers safely?

These products, when used occasionally and taken as directed, are safe and effective. Read the labels of all your over-the-counter medicines so you are aware of the correct recommended dosage. If a measuring tool is provided with your medicine, use it as directed.

What can happen if I do not use pain relievers/fever reducers correctly?

Using too much acetaminophen can cause serious liver damage, which may not be noticed for several days. NSAIDs, for some people with certain medical problems, can lead to the development of stomach bleeding and kidney disease.

What if I need to take more than one medicine?

There are many OTC medicines that contain the same active ingredient. If you take several medicines that happen to contain the same active ingredient, for example a pain reliever along with a cough-cold-fever medicine, you might be taking two times the normal dose and not know it. So read the label and avoid taking multiple medicines that contain the same active ingredient or talk to your pharmacist or health care professional.