

GENERIC NAME:

Acetaminophen



BRAND NAME:

**Tylenol
Arthritis Pain Extended Release,
Tylenol with codeine (# 1,2,3, Emtec)**

How it works:

- Acetaminophen is taken to relieve mild to moderate non-inflammatory pain and reduce fever.
- Acetaminophen does not reduce inflammation therefore it does not relieve the stiffness, redness & swelling that is associated with arthritis.

How quickly it works:

- It starts to work in about 45 minutes and lasts about 4 hours.
- The extended release acetaminophen will start to work in about 45 minutes & last about 8 hours.

How to take:

Acetaminophen products are available in tablets, capsules, liquid or suppository.

Acetaminophen is supplied in the following dosages:

1. Regular – 325 mg

2. Extra-strength – 500 mg

The usual dose of acetaminophen is 650 to 1000 mg every 4 to 6 hours.

Eg: Tylenol 325 mg: 1 to 3 tablets every 4 – 6 hours

Tylenol 500 mg: 1 to 2 tablets every 4 – 6 hours

3. Arthritis Pain Extended Release or 8 hour Tylenol – 650 mg

- (immediate-release 325 mg + slow-release 325 mg)

- 1 - 2 tablets every 8 hours

4. Acetaminophen with codeine:

- Tylenol # 1

(acetaminophen 300mg, caffeine 15 mg, codeine 8 mg)

- Tylenol # 2

(acetaminophen 300 mg, caffeine 15 mg, codeine 15 mg)

- Tylenol # 3

(acetaminophen 300 mg, caffeine 15 mg, codeine 30 mg)

- Emtec

(acetaminophen 300 mg + codeine 30 mg)

The recommended dosage is 1 to 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours.

The maximum amount of acetaminophen that can be taken daily (in 24 hours) for an adult is:

- Short-term use (≤ 10 days) – 4 grams (4000 mg)/day
- Long term use – 3.2 grams (3200 mg)/day
- If > 2 alcoholic drinks/day – 2 grams (2000 mg)/day
- If elderly – 2.6 grams (2600 mg)/day
- If on warfarin – 2 grams (2000 mg)/day

Lab Tests:



- No specific laboratory tests are required while taking acetaminophen unless monitoring of the liver enzymes is required for other medications or medical conditions.

Side Effects:

Possible side effects:

- Side effects from taking acetaminophen are rare if taken within the above recommended dosages.
- Potentially fatal liver damage can occur from taking too much acetaminophen.
- Codeine can cause drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, constipation, & sweating.

Managing Side Effects:



- Contact your doctor if you are experiencing any side effects from acetaminophen.

Precautions:

Medication Interactions:

- To prevent taking too much acetaminophen, check the labels of all over-the-counter and prescription medications you are taking. Many non-prescription products (Excedrin, Nyquil,



Theraflu) contain acetaminophen.

- Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages when taking Acetaminophen or Codeine.
- Avoid combining codeine with other medications that can increase sedation and suppress the central nervous system (eg. sleeping pills, muscle relaxants etc.)
- High dosages of acetaminophen may increase the anticoagulant effect of warfarin.

Conditions:

- Caution is recommended in the following conditions:
 - chronic alcoholism
 - liver disease
 - malnourished conditions
 - taking acetaminophen in combination with other medications that may interact with liver enzymes

Pregnancy/Breastfeeding:

- Acetaminophen crosses the placenta in pregnancy & is considered safe for short-term use within recommended dosages.
- Acetaminophen passes into breast milk within 1 to 2 hours after taking a dose, but is not likely to have an effect on the infant.

Storage:



- Keep medication in the original container and tightly closed.
- Keep in a cool, dry cupboard, & not in your bathroom as it is a warm, moist environment.
- Keep medication out of the reach of children.

General medication considerations:



1. Take your medication as instructed by your physician.

Work with your physician to determine how much medication you need.

Medications are started at low dosages & increase slowly to decrease the risk of side effects. Taking more medication

than is recommended increases your risk of side effects.

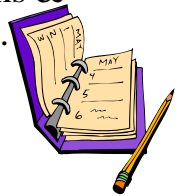
Skipping doses of medication will decrease the desired effect of the medication.

2. Keep a diary.

As a reminder, record when you take your medications & any reasons for changes or withdrawal of medications.

3. Keep a medication list in your wallet.

Record all medications, vitamin/mineral & herbal supplements you are presently taking & any allergies you may have.



Disclaimer:

This information does not replace medical advice. Specific questions about medications should be discussed with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Developed March 2007: Jane Prince RN, BScN, MPAP, Vancouver Arthritis Centre, VCHA