

# Over the Counter Pain Management

## First try:

### Tylenol Arthritis Pain Formula

- 650 mg per tab of Acetaminophen
- Long acting/extended release. Lasts up to 8 hours

### How to take it...

- Take on an empty stomach
- **Do not exceed** 4000 mg of Acetaminophen per 24 hour period
  - This is 2 Tylenol Arthritis Pain tabs, 3 times every 24 hours (= 3900 mg)
  - Tylenol Arthritis can be taken with regular or extra strength Tylenol for faster relief, just keep track of total dosage.
  - As long as you stay within the 4000 mg limit, it is safe to take Tylenol indefinitely
- Do not take Acetaminophen if you:
  - have an allergy to it
  - have a compromised liver or liver disease, or
  - are a heavy alcohol user
- **Read the label of all OTC and prescription meds to keep your daily dose of Acetaminophen at 4000mg or less.**

### Did you know?

Many OTC cold and sleep remedies and prescriptions often contain Acetaminophen. Always read the label and keep track of your doses.

## For knee, shoulder, hand or foot arthritis, also try:

### Creams and gels

- Capsaicin cream – contains chili peppers (Lakota and Zostrix)
  - Tricks the nerves with heat
- Creams with salicylates - NSAID (Aspercreme, Rub A535)
  - Tricks the nerves with cool and decreases inflammation
- Creams with Diclofenac – NSAID (Voltaren 1%)
  - Relieves swelling and inflammation

### How to use...

- Be consistent and persistent as this method works over time not right away
- 2-3 times per day for 3-4 weeks
- Use sparingly i.e. only on the spot that hurts and wash hands after use
- If no relief in 4 weeks, either try a different type or increase the concentration
- Once you feel some relief, attempt to back off on oral meds
- Though rare, NSAID creams may cause the same side effects as oral NSAIDS

## Next try:

### **Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS)**

(Also known as COX-1 Inhibitors)

Three types over the counter:

1. Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) 200 - 400 mg, every 6 hours
  - Maximum dosage 1200 mg/day for 7 days or less
2. Naproxen (Aleve) 220 mg, twice a day
  - Maximum dose 440 mg/day for 7 days or less
3. Acetylsalicylic Acid (Aspirin or ASA) 300 mg - 1000 mg, 4 times per day
  - Maximum dose 4000 mg/day for 7 days or less
  - **ASA is not recommended for OA pain management.**

#### **NSAIDS have more side effects than Tylenol. They can:**

- Irritate the stomach lining
- Increase blood pressure
- Thin the blood, which can cause you to bleed more easily
- Cause kidney problems

#### **How to take...**

- Always take with food
- Ideal for flare-ups while using Tylenol (**can be safely taken together**) or short term anti-inflammatory trial (3-7 days) to break the chronic inflammatory pain cycle
- Avoid alcohol while taking NSAID (can cause stomach bleeds)
- Do not take any NSAID along with Aspirin or any other NSAID
- **Talk with your GP and/or pharmacist** if you have kidney disease, high blood pressure, cardiac issues, diabetes, and/or have a bleeding disorder, or are on medications for any of these issues, before taking any NSAID (cream or oral)

**Always read the label  
and keep track of total  
24 hour dose of  
whatever you are taking.  
DO NOT exceed  
recommended dose.**