

What is acetaminophen?

Acetaminophen is a common medicine used to treat pain. If you are taking prescription pain medicine, your capsule or tablet may include 2 or more different types of medicine. Pain medications are often combined like this to provide additional pain relief with lower doses of each of the medicines. Some of these “combination” prescription medicines may include acetaminophen. Lortab®, Percocet®, and Roxicet™ are just a few prescription pain medicines that include acetaminophen.

Common over-the-counter drugs that contain acetaminophen

Although acetaminophen is best known as the active ingredient in the drug Tylenol®, it is also an ingredient in hundreds of other over-the-counter medicines, such as other pain relievers, cough medicines, cold medications, and sleep aids. Here are just a few.

Analgesics	Cold remedies	Sleep aids
Tylenol®	Benadryl® Severe Allergy and Sinus Headache	Tylenol® PM
Excedrin®	Sudafed PE™ Sinus Headache Caplets	Excedrin PM®
Midol® Menstrual Complete	Tylenol® Chest Congestion	NyQuil®
Pamprin® Multi-Symptom Caplets	Tylenol® Cold Multi-Symptom Daytime	
	DayQuil®	

Safety considerations

An overdose of acetaminophen can cause serious problems, including permanent liver damage. **Because acetaminophen is a common ingredient in many prescription and nonprescription medicines, it is important to be aware of the amount of acetaminophen you take each day from all medicines.**



Tips for use

- Before taking any medicine, always read the label to determine whether acetaminophen is one of the active ingredients. If you are unsure, check with your pharmacist
- It is always best to talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking more than one medicine containing acetaminophen
- The amount of acetaminophen is important. The maximum **total** daily dose of acetaminophen is 4 grams (4000 milligrams) for healthy adults. This is equivalent to 12 tablets of regular-strength acetaminophen in any 24-hour period or 8 tablets of extra-strength acetaminophen in any 24-hour period. And don't forget to ask your healthcare professional how much acetaminophen is in your prescription medicine
- If you drink 3 or more alcoholic beverages a day, you may be at risk for acetaminophen overdose and possibly liver damage

It is always best to ask your healthcare professional before taking another medicine containing acetaminophen. Tell your healthcare provider about your medical and family history. Also tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines