



HEALTH AWARENESS

Over-The-Counter Overdose—Don't Overdo It

(NAPSA)—Outdoor activity often starts with good intentions but frequently ends with sore muscles and sometimes even serious injury. As people become more active, more and more people often find themselves turning to over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers or analgesics to ease their aches and pains.

OTC pain relievers are safe and effective when used as directed, but they can be dangerous if taken in excess, even if unintentionally. From taking a few extra pills to better treat the ache, to unknowingly combining an OTC pain reliever for a headache with a prescription pain reliever for injury-related pain, analgesic overdose can occur many different ways and quite often by accident.

So, to avoid injury, it is important to read OTC medication labels carefully, with particular attention paid to the recommended dose and duration of use.

Take the quiz below to see if you're well-informed on the safety of one well-known and widely used OTC pain reliever—acetaminophen, or Tylenol:

Tylenol is the only OTC medication containing acetaminophen. True or False?

False. There are many OTC products containing acetaminophen that consumers would not suspect including, for example, cough and cold medications. Additionally, prescription pain medications—often prescribed to alleviate severe pain—can contain acetaminophen.

Acetaminophen overdose is a common occurrence. True or False?

True. A 2002 FDA analysis indicated that more than 56,000 emergency room visits each year were a result of acetaminophen overdose,



It's a healthy idea to read the labels of over-the-counter medications to be sure you're not getting more of certain drugs than is good for you.

and more than 25,000 people a year were being hospitalized for acetaminophen overdose.

There are clear symptoms for people who accidentally overdose on acetaminophen. True or False?

False. It's a little known fact, but those who overdose on acetaminophen are symptom-free during the brief period when medical attention can rectify the resulting liver damage.

Unfortunately, they may not seek timely medical attention, often resulting in liver failure.

Almost all acetaminophen overdoses are intentional. True or False?

False. The 2002 FDA data found at least one-fourth of emergency room visits involving acetaminophen overdose were clearly unintentional in origin.

If you have any questions about the safe and appropriate use of any pain medications, speak with your pharmacist or health care provider.