

Medications for Pain

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Pain medications, whether over-the-counter or prescription strength, can aid in the management of chronic and various types of pain. Because these are potent medications, it's critical to utilise them with caution. Start with the safest medications at the lowest effective dose for the shortest time possible and work your way up as needed.

Be aware of any potential adverse effects as well as interactions with other medications and supplements you may be taking. Also, always follow the label guidelines or your doctor's prescription.

1. Pain relievers available over-the-counter

The following are examples of over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers:

- Acetaminophen is a pain reliever (Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen, naproxen, and diclofenac gel are examples of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs).

Acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) both lower temperature and relieve discomfort from muscle aches and stiffness, but only NSAIDs can also reduce inflammation (swelling, heat, redness related to an injury, and irritation). Acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) function in distinct ways. NSAIDs work by lowering the synthesis of prostaglandins, which are hormone-like chemicals that induce inflammation and pain. Acetaminophen affects the areas of the brain that receive "pain signals." NSAIDs are also available in prescription strength, which your doctor can prescribe.

Regular use of NSAIDs, especially at high doses, raises the risk of heart attacks and strokes, as well as ulcers and bleeding in the stomach. They can also harm the kidneys. Taking acetaminophen in excessive dosages on a daily basis might cause liver damage. Taking a huge dose of medication all at once, whether on purpose or by mistake, is a medical emergency.

Without a doctor's prescription, topical pain medications are also accessible. Creams, lotions, and sprays that are applied to the skin to reduce pain from tight muscles and arthritis are examples of these goods. Aspercreme, BenGay, capsaicin cream, diclofenac gel, and Icy Hot are some examples of topical pain treatments.

2. Painkillers on prescription

The following are examples of pain-relieving prescription medications:

- Corticosteroids
- Opioids
- Antidepressants
- Anticonvulsants are drugs that are used to treat seizures (anti-seizure medications)
- NSAIDs
- Patches containing lidocaine

3. What are corticosteroids and how do they work?

Prescription corticosteroids relieve swelling, redness, itching, and allergic reactions in inflamed parts of the body. Allergies, asthma, and arthritis can all be treated with corticosteroids. They are usually delivered in the form of pills or injections that target a specific joint when used to control pain. Methylprednisolone, prednisolone, and prednisone are among examples.

Corticosteroids prescribed by a doctor are powerful drugs that can have major side effects, including:

- Salt retention and weight gain
- Peptic ulcer illness is a type of stomach ulcer.
- Mood swings
- Sleeping problems
- Immune system dysfunction
- Bone thinning and skin thinning
- Sugar levels that are too high

To reduce the risk of adverse effects, corticosteroids are recommended at the lowest dose possible for as little time as is necessary to relieve pain. Another option for reducing these adverse effects is to inject the steroid directly into the problem location.

4. What are opioids and how do they work?

Natural, synthetic, or semi-synthetic opiates are found in narcotic pain treatments. Opioids are frequently used for acute pain, such as post-surgery discomfort. The following are some examples of opioids:

- Codeine
- Fentanyl
- Hydrocodone-acetaminophen
- Morphine\Oxycodone
- Oxycodone-acetaminophen

Opioids, unlike some other types of pain medicines, are helpful for severe pain and do not induce bleeding in the stomach or other regions of the body. They can, however, be highly addictive, thus doctors will look for alternatives to prescribing them. When opioids are used to manage pain for a short length of time, it is uncommon for people to

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become addicted to them. However, if used to manage chronic pain, there is a genuine and very severe risk of addiction.

Opioid side effects may include:

- Drowsiness
- Vomiting and nausea
- Constipation
- Itching
- Breathing difficulties
- Addiction