

Your Patients' Cold and Flu Season Survival Guide

Cold and flu season is here again, which means we as healthcare professionals are on especially high alert for potential dosing mistakes among our patients. Seven in 10 will use over-the-counter (OTC) medicines to treat their cold and flu symptoms, and research shows that [consumers don't always know](#) that taking two medicines with the same ingredient could be harmful. Furthermore, [two in three consumers don't consider](#) other OTC medicines they're taking when choosing an OTC pain reliever.

This year's cold and flu season will be complicated by the spread of COVID-19, so now is the time to remind your patients that many fever reducers and multi-symptom cold and flu medicines contain the common drug ingredient acetaminophen. In fact, acetaminophen is found in more than 600 different OTC and prescription medicines. It's safe and effective when used as directed, but patients who take medicines with acetaminophen for everyday pain relief may not realize they risk accidentally doubling their dose by taking certain cold and flu medicines. Make sure your patients know that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has set a maximum daily dose of 4,000 milligrams (mg) of acetaminophen in a 24-hour period and taking more than directed can lead to liver damage.

These core safe use steps from the Know Your Dose campaign, of which NARHC is a proud partner, will help your patients use medicines with acetaminophen safely:

- **Always read and follow the label.**
- **Know if your medicines contain acetaminophen.**
- **Take only one medicine at a time that contains acetaminophen.**
Doublecheck, don't double up!
- **Ask your healthcare provider or a pharmacist** if you have questions about dosing instructions or medicines that contain acetaminophen.



Order free educational materials on acetaminophen safe use for your office or pharmacy at [KnowYourDose.org](https://www.knowyourdose.org), and follow [@KnowYourDose](https://twitter.com/KnowYourDose) on Twitter.