

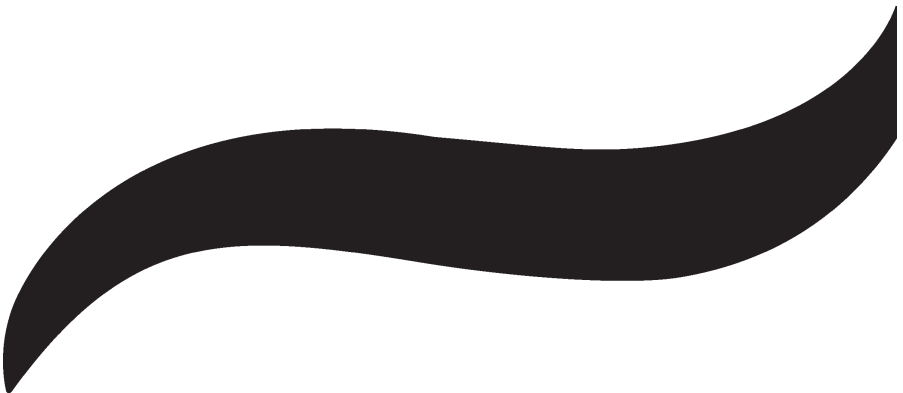


# Paracetamol

Information for patients

Prescribing Management Team

Kirklands Hospital





## **PARACETAMOL**

Paracetamol is a good general pain management medication. It is used to help manage lots of different types of chronic pain conditions.

The usual dose for paracetamol is one or two tablets (500-1000mg) four times a day. You should not take more than 2 tablets at a time. A gap of at least four hours should be left between doses. A maximum of eight tablets should be taken in a 24 hour period (4000mg or 4g).

Paracetamol is available in different formulations such as tablets, caplets, capsules, soluble tablets and liquids. They usually contain 500mg of paracetamol.

Caplets are tablets shaped like a capsule. They can be useful where people find the tablets hard to swallow. The soluble tablets contain a high amount of salt. The liquid is mostly used for children.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING REGULAR PARACETAMOL**

Sometimes people believe they need something ‘stronger’ than paracetamol when in fact, taking a regular dose rather than a one-off dose is more effective.

Spreading the doses of the paracetamol evenly out over a day will help you control your pain.

Two paracetamol 500mg tablets every four to six hours. This could be taken at 8am, 1pm, 6pm and 10pm

Some people prefer to ‘keep’ a dose in case they wake during the night and need help with their pain.

Two paracetamol 500mg tablets every four to six hours. This could be taken at 8am, 2pm, 8pm and two tablets at some point during the night.

## **SIDE EFFECTS AND SAFETY**

Paracetamol is nearly free from side effects. All patients are different, some may have mild side effects but this is unusual. Paracetamol is a safe medication if taken as prescribed. It is dangerous to take more than this and can cause damage to your liver.

If you have problems with your liver or drink a lot of alcohol you should talk to your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist about this before taking paracetamol, or other tablets with paracetamol in them.

## **COMBINING STANDARD PARACETAMOL TABLETS WITH OTHER PARACETAMOL CONTAINING PRODUCTS:**

Paracetamol can be used with stronger pain management medications (analgesics) to get more pain relief.

It can be taken as a single tablet with both drugs in it. To show the combination of medications the name starts with co-.

### **For example:**

Co-codamol 30/500, contains a combination of 30mg codeine and 500mg paracetamol per tablet.

Co-dydramol 20/500mg, contains a combination of 20mg dihydrocodeine and 500mg paracetamol per tablet.

A prescription is required for these strengths. Lower strengths of these medication combinations can be bought from pharmacies for short term use only. Some cough and cold preparation also contain paracetamol. Be careful not to take these medications at the same time.

**REMEMBER** each Co-codamol or Co-dydramol tablet contains the equivalent of 500mg of Paracetamol. You should take no more than 8 paracetamol containing tablets/caplets in 24 hours (4000mg or 4g of Paracetamol)

## **MEDICATION IN CHRONIC PAIN**

The benefit from taking medication should always be more than any side-effects you may have. Only you:

- ❖ know how bad your pain is
- ❖ are able to say if your medication is helping
- ❖ know what side effects you are having

Getting the best effect from your medication may be a matter of trial and error. It may help to keep a diary of your pain and other symptoms.

Side effects often become less once you have been on a medicine for a few days. It may be several days or weeks before you notice that a new medicine is making a difference.

Please read the patient information sheet given with each medication. It will give you more information about the medicine and any side effects.

You can discuss your pain medication with your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist. They can give you advice on which pain medicines may help and they can help you find the best way to take your medicines. They can advise you on putting your dose up safely if your pain is worse and on taking less medication safely when your pain is less.

If your medicine is not helping, you may not need to take it. Please talk to your doctor or pharmacist before stopping as some pain medicines should not be stopped suddenly.

Do not share or take other peoples medication. Always advise your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist about any other medication or products you are taking for chronic pain, including things bought from the pharmacy, herbal supplements or non-prescribed medicines.

**Understanding how your medications work will help you to get the best pain relief with the least side-effects.**

We hope you found this information leaflet helpful. This information is not intended to replace your Doctor's advice. If you have any comments about the content, please let us know. This can be done by filling in the comment section, and sending it to the Prescribing Management Team at the address listed below, or by email.

Prescribing Management Team  
Kirklands Hospital  
Fallside Road  
Bothwell G71 8BB  
[prescribing@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:prescribing@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)



# CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

NHS Lanarkshire take care to ensure your personal information is only accessible to authorised people. Our staff have a legal and contractual duty to keep personal health information secure, and confidential. In order to find out more about current data protection legislation and how we process your information, please visit the Data Protection Notice on our website at [www.nhslanarkshire.scot](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot) or ask a member of staff for a copy of our Data Protection Notice.

This publication is adapted with the kind agreement of NHS Fife Pain Management Service and approved for use in NHS Lanarkshire.

**NHS Lanarkshire** - for local services and the latest health news visit [www.nhslanarkshire.scot](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot)  
NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

**NHS inform** - The national health information service for Scotland.  
[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)  
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line on 0300 3030 243 or e-mail [info@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:info@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)



[www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk)

Pub. date:	Sept 2018
Review date:	Aug 2020
Issue No:	01a
Department:	Prescribing Team

PIL.PARECET.18\_18837.L