
AUTHORIZED BY: CPC Quality of Care Committee
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CATEGORY: ACP/PCP Medications
TITLE: **Acetaminophen**

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PAGE: 1 of 2

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- Other Names:**
- Tylenol, Paracetamol
- Classifications:**
- Analgesic, Antipyretic
- Pharmacodynamics:**
- The proposed mechanism of acetaminophen's analgesic action is through inhibition of prostaglandin synthetase in the CNS.
 - The antipyretic effect may involve a direct effect on the heat-regulating centres in the hypothalamus, causing increased heat dissipation through vasodilation and sweating.
 - Does not cause gastrointestinal ulceration or inhibit platelet aggregation
- Onset:**
- 10-30 minutes PO
- Peak:**
- 45 minutes
- Duration:**
- 4 hours
- Indications:**
- Mild to moderate pain relief
 - Relief of fever
- Contraindications:**
- Acetaminophen use within the previous 4 hours
 - Allergy or sensitivity to acetaminophen
 - Active vomiting
 - Unable to tolerate oral medication
 - History of liver disease
- Precautions:**
- Certain patients may be more susceptible to acetaminophen toxicity (alcoholics, liver disease, malnourished)
 - Caution should be taken when multiple acetaminophen containing products are used at the same time.
- Adverse Reactions:**
- Chronic use of high doses may produce hepatotoxicity
 - Hypersensitivity may cause laryngeal edema, angioedema, bronchospasm and/or anaphylaxis
 - Dose dependent cross-sensitivity to acetaminophen in up to 34% of ASA-sensitive asthma patients. Doses under 1000 mg recommended for these patients
- Special Considerations:**
- Anticoagulants: Acetaminophen may potentiate the anticoagulant effect of warfarin
 - Enzyme inducers such as barbituates and antiepileptics may enhance the metabolism of acetaminophen, can result in a diminished therapeutic effect.
 - Food delays the absorption of acetaminophen.
 - Acetaminophen crosses the placenta and is considered safe for short term use with therapeutic doses

Preparations:

- Immediate release and extended release tablets of variable strength (325mg, 500 mg, 650 mg)

References:

- Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties 2013
- Ontario Provincial ALS Patient Care Standards, Version 4.5

NOTE: *The information contained herein does not supersede or negate the MoHLTC Provincial Medical Directives and should only serve as general information about the medication itself. For medication dosages, please refer to the current version of the Ontario Provincial ALS Patient Care Standards.*