

Three Dangerous Drugs That Could Be In Your Medicine Cabinet Now

DR. MERCOLA



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**OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS CAN PUT YOUR HEALTH IN DANGER,
BUT THERE ARE SAFE AND SIMPLE ALTERNATIVES.**

IT'S A COMMON REACTION: You come down with an ache or pain, a cold or cough, a touch of indigestion, so you reach for the medicine cabinet and the colorful bottles of pills and syrups inside.

Most people don't give a second thought to the medications they pop into their mouths, or to what those medicines do once they are inside our bodies. If we can purchase a drug at the local pharmacy or supermarket, we naturally assume it's safe. Unfortunately, the drugs that get all the press for being pulled off the market aren't the only ones we should be worried about.



THE STARTLING TRUTH IS, OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) MEDICATIONS CAN BE JUST AS DEADLY AS PRESCRIPTION OR ILLICIT DRUGS.

The government estimates that, each year, about 100 people die from overdosing on acetaminophen, and roughly 56,000 people end up in the emergency due to its misuse. All OTC drugs carry the risk of side effects, and they can interact with beneficial foods, vitamins, herbs and other medicines to cause unintended harm.

Here are three common types of OTC drugs I feel are particularly dangerous, along with their safe and natural alternatives.

OTC PAINKILLERS AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently warned against the long-term use of painkiller drugs, stating that all anti-inflammatories pose a danger. The FDA has urged the public to limit the use of OTC pain medications and to use them strictly as instructed by the label.

OTC pain relievers you should be wary of:

- *Aleve*
- *Aspirin*
- *Acetaminophen (Tylenol)*
- *Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)*



ALEVE®, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), was the first non-prescription NSAID added to a list of painkillers associated with heart attacks and strokes. **ALEVE®** is so potentially detrimental to health that those who have been taking it for over two years have been advised to stop using it. Those who choose to continue taking it should take no more than two pills a day for no longer than 10 days (unless otherwise directed by a doctor).

A study of 900 patients prone to cancer and heart problems found that, while NSAIDs did cut the development of oral cancer in half, after taking OTC painkillers for at least six months, they doubled their chances of dying from stroke, heart attack and other heart-related problems. **IBUPROFEN** users were nearly three times more likely to die of one of these diseases than non-NSAID users.

One recent study found that the use of NSAIDs caused a ten-fold increase in the risk of congestive heart failure (CHF) in patients with a history of heart disease. Even in those without a history of heart disease, the use of NSAIDs increased that risk by 60%. The authors of this study speculate that NSAIDs could be responsible for as many as one in every five hospital admissions for CHF.

ASPIRIN and **ACETAMINOPHEN (TYLENOL®)** have also been linked to kidney failure. Approximately 15% of the people on dialysis today are there as a result of the damage done to their kidneys by **TYLENOL®** and/or **ASPIRIN**. People who use either of these drugs regularly are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with chronic renal failure than those who do not. People with existing kidney disease or other ailments who take these painkillers twice a week for as little as two months are two to three times more likely to show early symptoms of chronic kidney failure.

OTC painkillers may also increase your blood pressure. One study examined the medical histories of 80,000 women between the ages of 31 and 50 who were initially hypertension-

free. It showed that those who used NSAIDs more than 21 days per month had an 86% increase in their risk for developing high blood pressure. Due to this strong correlation, researchers concluded that a large portion of hypertension cases in the U.S. could be the result of the overuse of common pain relievers.

OTC HEARTBURN AND INDIGESTION REMEDIES

About 40 million Americans experience frequent heartburn or acid reflux. Many others experience painful gastritis or inflamed stomach lining. For these common discomforts, many people take OTC medications to reduce stomach acid.

Stomach remedies you should be wary of:

- *Pepcid®*
- *Maalox®*
- *Tums®*
- *Prilosec®*
- *Prevacid®*



PRILOSEC®, an acid-blocker, is the top-selling prescription drug in the world, and the FDA may soon clear it to be sold OTC. Unfortunately, like so many other OTC medications, it simply masks symptoms instead of providing any real cure.

Two new studies, conducted by scientists at the **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MEDICAL SCHOOL**, showed that reducing the amount of acid in the stomach is exactly the wrong thing to do for these ailments. Bacteria in the stomachs of laboratory mice were found to be the cause of gastritis and stomach inflammation. The stomach produces hydrochloric acid to kill these invading microbes. Drugs such as **PRILOSEC®** inhibit acid production, interfering with the stomach's natural defense system. Mice treated with **PRILOSEC®** or **PREVACID®** actually acquired more bacteria and developed more inflammatory changes in their stomach linings.

In another study (commissioned by a group of drug companies and conducted by Acuity and Harris Interactive) scientists found that eliminating a single type of bacterium, *Helicobacter pylori* (the bacterium that causes ulcers), with antibiotics appeared to be just as effective as **PRILOSEC®** for preventing bleeding in patients taking aspirin. There are different types of bacteria that cause gastritis, and if untreated, can lead to peptic ulcers and stomach cancer.

Also, reducing the amount of acid inside the stomach can diminish your ability to digest food properly.

OTC COUGH AND COLD PREPARATIONS

It's true: the common cold has yet to be cured. But be careful which cold preparations you use to soothe your sore throat, nagging cough, or stuffed sinuses.

Cold remedies you should be wary of:

- *antihistamines (Chlor-Trimeton[®], Benadryl[®])*
- *dextromethorphan*
- *diphenhydramine*

There are two problems with antihistamines like **CHLOR-TRIMETON[®]** and **BENADRYL[®]**. They can put you to sleep, which may only be an issue during the day, but they can also increase your risk of developing a secondary sinus infection by thickening the nasal secretions and impairing proper drainage.



In what comes as no surprise to many, common OTC cough syrups just don't work. The two active ingredients in many OTC cough syrups, **DEXTROMETHORPHAN (DM)** and **DIPHENHYDRAMINE**, have not been shown to alleviate nighttime cough, nor do they improve sleep quality in children any better than a placebo. **DM** has also been found to cause birth defects when taken by women who are pregnant, and has become a popularly abused drug among adolescents.

In addition, I avoid vaccines like the flu shot. They're loaded with toxins such as mercury, aluminum and phenol.

THERE ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVES

I've been warning about the dangers of common medications for years. In addition to their immediate health hazards, I believe these medications fail to offer any real cure; they merely mask symptoms. This is why I advocate prevention and treatment through smart and healthy eating, key nutrients, exercise, and easy lifestyle changes.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES TO PAINKILLERS AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES

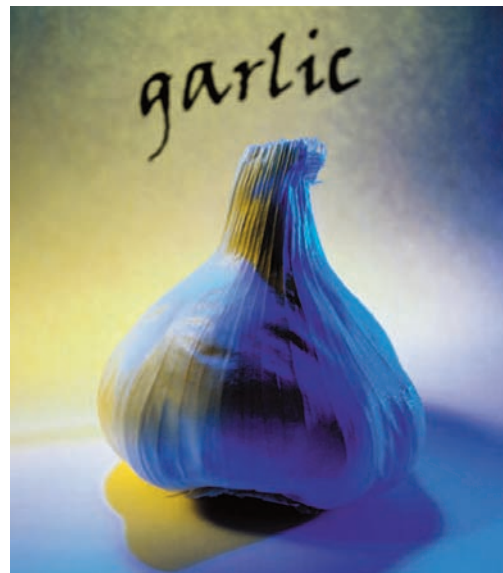
Eliminating sugar and grains is probably the most important step in reducing painful inflammation. Increasing your intake of omega-3 fats and reducing your intake of omega-6 fats can radically reduce the need for NSAIDs. I'm a fan of Carlson's brand of fish oil and cod liver oil, an excellent source of omega-3. This brand is free of mercury and PCBs and

also has extra vitamin E added. I often see a clear and substantial improvement in my patients who use it.

Natural alternative to acid blockers

- Following my dietary guidelines.*
- Drink a gallon of pure water every day.*
- Use 1-2 cloves of raw fresh garlic per day.*
- Use high quality probiotics.*
- As always, avoid eating sugar!*

Acid reflux is easily recognized by its symptom of heartburn. It reportedly affects 10% of American adults every day and, if left untreated, causes reflux esophagitis, an inflammation of the esophagus. Common OTC treatments are based on the suppression of acid. An anti-parasite herb, artemisia, seems to be useful for this condition, but like OTC drugs, this is just another symptom mask. Garlic, which is far less expensive, is a more effective option.



NATURAL COLD TREATMENTS

With colds, prevention is best, but there are steps you can take to ease the symptoms of a cold once you're infected.

Research has shown that zinc lozenges reduce the severity and duration of cold symptoms, particularly sore throat. Researchers believe that zinc is directly toxic to the virus responsible for your cold, and stimulates your body to produce antibodies. I have been using zinc in my practice for over 15 years. However, I recommend caution: only about one quarter of a lozenge every 30 minutes. If you feel nauseous, stop immediately.

I have also found that putting about half a capful of common household hydrogen peroxide in each ear several times a day can abort a case of cold or flu. In fact, I've seen hundreds of cases of cold and flu eradicated through this simple treatment.

Extra Vitamin A and C may also be helpful. Garlic is an excellent natural antibiotic. Additionally, essential fatty acids such as flaxseed oil should be taken regularly. They help your immune system build the proper antibodies.

If you have a cold, you should stop your intake of dairy products in order to decrease the mucous they cause you to produce. Be sure to cut back on your refined sugar and carbohydrate intake; they weaken your immune system and promote yeast overgrowth.

And, believe it or not, chicken soup may indeed help your cold symptoms. An amino acid in chicken, called cysteine, can thin the mucous in congested lungs.

PREVENTION IS THE SINGLE BEST COLD REMEDY

There is quite a bit of confusion about how the cold germ is transmitted. The truth is, hand-to-hand contact is the most common source of infection. Washing your hands often with a non-chemical soap is a good preventive measure.

Psychological stress can intensify the severity of cold and flu symptoms. Get plenty of sleep – an overtired body is more susceptible to illness. A healthy body is better equipped to fend off infection.



Above all– I can't stress this enough– the best treatment for any ailment is a strong immune system. You can assist in this by eating correctly (as outlined in my eating plan), and by increasing your intake of healthy fats, such as omega-3. Plus, avoid the sugar and refined carbohydrates that weaken your immune system.