

NSAIDS – AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

NSAIDs are some of the most commonly used medications and are generally recognized as a safe, effective treatment for many conditions. This information has been prepared for medical providers to share with patients to explain the importance of proper management of OTC & prescription NSAID medications to prevent gastrointestinal complications.

01 | What are NSAIDs?

NSAIDs – or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs – gained popularity in the 1970s and are used to decrease pain and inflammation as well as to reduce fever. Some well-known examples include aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen. Whether you are trying to alleviate a headache with aspirin or you've been prescribed NSAIDs as the result of an injury or from a chronic pain condition such as arthritis, it is important to know how to use your medication safely and effectively.

02 | Always Read—and Follow—Directions

NSAIDs are considered an effective and safe method of treatment for a number of indications. As with any medication, however, it is important to read and follow all OTC and prescription labels and accompanying advice from the pharmacy or prescribing physician. When used properly, it is unlikely that a patient will experience any serious side effects.

03 | Problems That May Arise

Certain medical conditions and lifestyle habits can increase the risk for side effects. Be sure to advise your medical provider of any of the following factors:

- Cigarette smoking
- Daily alcohol use
- Anti-inflammatory steroid use
- History of stomach ulcers
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Kidney or liver problems

These factors, as well as the improper or overuse of OTC or prescription NSAIDs can cause complications which can be serious, including gastrointestinal ulcers or bleeding.

04 | An Active Role in Preventing Complications

To prevent potential complications and benefit the most from NSAID use, your medical provider may recommend that you take your medication with food or may prescribe a stomach acid blocker to help offset potential gastrointestinal issues. As with any health concern or question, open communication with your medical provider is critical to your well-being. Discuss any new symptoms or issues with your physician and follow the treatment plan and recommendations carefully so you can minimize side effects and difficulties while taking NSAIDs.

For more information on the safe use of prescription and OTC medications, please visit <http://www.consumermedsafety.org/>

Did You Know?
Aspirin's active ingredient comes from Willow bark

References

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<http://consumer.healthday.com/encyclopedia/digestive-health-14/digestion-health-news-200/aspirin-ibuprofen-and-intestinal-disorders-644754.html>