

Anti-inflammatory and Painkilling Drugs

Commonly used anti-inflammatory and painkilling drugs are generally classified into two categories.

The first category refers to analgesics and antipyretics, such as aspirin and paracetamol. They are available in the form of pills, liquids and suppositories.

The second category refers to Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs, or NSAID. They have stronger painkilling effect, and are available in the form of pills, liquids and suppositories.

NSAID have the properties of relieving fever, killing pain and suppressing inflammation. Therefore, they are frequently used for rheumatoid arthritis, gout, neural muscle disorder, soft tissue inflammation as well as common pains like headache, toothache and menstrual pain. Common examples of NSAID are ibuprofen, indomethacin and naproxen. Most NSAID can only be sold on doctor's prescription in registered dispensaries.

Side Effects of the Drugs

Aspirin has a major side effect of irritation to gastric mucosa and should be taken after meals with plenty of water. The irritation could be effectively reduced if it is taken with antacids. A soluble formula, which is to be taken after dissolving into water, is available in the market and it aims at reducing such irritation. Other side effects include nausea, vomiting and tinnitus. The following patients should not take aspirin unless instructed by a doctor:

1. Patients with a history of allergy to the drug;
2. Patients who are taking anticoagulant; and
3. Patients suffering from gout, diabetes or asthma.

Patients on long-term use of aspirin must follow the instructions of the doctor to achieve the expected efficacy.

Paracetamol brings lesser upset to the stomach but prolonged use and overdose may harm the liver. Patients should refrain from alcohol if they are taking this drug.

NSAID have more side effects such as gastrointestinal discomfort, dizziness, diarrhea

or even gastrorrhagia. They should be used only on doctor's prescription and taken after meals with antacids.

Pregnant or breastfeeding women and patients suffering from peptic ulcer should never take NSAID. In case of loose or black stool after medication or side effects including severe headache, diarrhea, swollen eyes or skin rash, consult a doctor right away.

Life Adaptations

Patients suffering from different kinds of rheumatic diseases need frequent medication to ease their pain. Despite this, the best way to reduce the side effects of medication is to avoid prolonged dependence. Patients should follow their doctor's instructions and take medication only when necessary. They can try physiotherapy, physical exercise or hydrotherapy. Analgesics for external application like wintergreen ointment may also help. Staying happy and participation in social activities could also help lessen the dependence on anti-inflammatory and painkilling drugs.

Storage of the Drugs

The drugs should be kept in a cool and dry place. Generally, they do not need to be refrigerated unless otherwise stated in the drug labels. Also, they should be stored properly to avoid accidents of mistaken consumption by children.