

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)

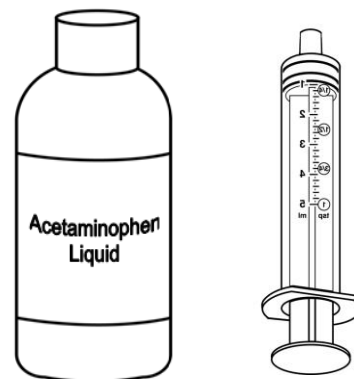
Acetaminophen (a see tah MIN o fen) is the generic name for Tylenol® (TIE len ol). Other names for this medicine are Tempra® and Feverall®. Many grocery stores and pharmacies have their own brands.

You can get acetaminophen as a liquid, chewable tablets, regular tablets or capsules, and suppositories. It comes in different strengths and does not need a prescription.

Acetaminophen is used to reduce fever and treat pain. Your child's symptoms should get better in 15 to 30 minutes after taking a dose.

How to give this medicine

- **Shake this medicine** before using if it is a liquid.
- Use a pediatric measuring device such as a syringe, spoon or cup (available at the pharmacy) to get the exact dose. Many packages will have their own measuring device in the box. Do not measure liquid medicines in kitchen spoons.
- Read the label carefully and make sure you are giving your child the right amount. It is easy to confuse the different forms and strengths.
- Give the exact dose of medicine that your child's health care provider ordered (Picture 1).
- Ask your child's pharmacist, nurse or health care provider before crushing any medicine.
- Chewable tablets may be chewed, dissolved in liquid or swallowed whole.
- Stay with your child until they have swallowed the dose of medicine.
- Suppositories should be moistened with water or Vaseline® before inserting into your child's rectum.



Picture 1 Give the exact dose and correct form of the medicine.

- Do not give more than 5 doses of this medicine in a 24-hour period unless ordered by your child's health care provider.
- Do not give this medicine for more than 3 days without checking with your child's health care provider.

If a dose is vomited

- If your child gags or chokes and spits out the dose before swallowing it, let the child calm down and then give the same amount one more time.
- If the medicine is vomited (thrown up) right after you give it, wait 20 minutes. Then give the same size dose one more time. If the vomiting continues, call your child's doctor.

Drug and food interactions

Acetaminophen should not be taken with the following:

- **Alcohol.** Drinking alcohol when taking acetaminophen may cause liver damage.
- **Some daily prescription medicines.** Long-time treatment with acetaminophen and certain prescription medicines that are taken every day may cause liver damage. Examples include carbamazepine (Tegretol®), isoniazid (INH), lamotrigine (Lamictal®), phenytoin (Dilantin®) and warfarin (Coumadin®). Ask the prescriber or pharmacist if your child's medicines can be taken with acetaminophen.
- **Narcotic pain medicines that contain acetaminophen** (such as Tylenol® with codeine, Vicodin®, Lortab®, Norco®, and Percocet®). Giving these with plain acetaminophen may cause your child to overdose on acetaminophen.
- **Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.** Many OTC medicines for cough and cold, allergies, pain and sleeplessness contain acetaminophen. Read the label or check with your child's health care provider or pharmacist first.
- **Vitamin or mineral supplements.** Ask your child's health care provider if it is all right to give these.

Warnings

It is not safe to give your child more than 4 grams (4,000 milligrams (mg)) in 24 hours. Let your child's health care provider know if your child:

- is allergic to acetaminophen.
- has a condition called G6PD deficiency.
- has a condition called phenylketonuria (PKU). Some acetaminophen products, like the chewable tablets, contain aspartame which can be harmful to children with PKU.
- has liver or kidney disease.

Medicine storage

- Store all medicine out of the reach of children.
- Always keep medicine in the original bottle from the pharmacy.
- Do not keep this medicine in the refrigerator. Store at room temperature.
- If this medicine is a tablet or capsule, light and moisture make the medicine not work as well. Keep the bottle tightly closed and store it in a dark, dry place. Do not keep it in the bathroom or above the kitchen sink.
- If this medicine is a suppository, it may melt if stored in excessive heat. Store suppositories in a cool, dark place. They can also be stored in the refrigerator.
- Keep this medicine away from heat and direct sunlight.
- Do not use this medicine after the expiration date printed on the container.

Possible side effects

Side effects from acetaminophen are rare. However, if a skin rash or bruises appear, stop giving the medicine and call your child's health care provider (see next section).

When to call the doctor

Call your child's doctor or health care provider if your child has any of these signs:

- your child does not look well
- the fever goes higher after giving the medicine
- fever is 103°F or higher
- fever lasts for more than 3 days
- pain is not better or gone after taking the medicine
- your child develops a skin rash
- your child has signs of liver damage, such as:
 - nausea and vomiting
 - dark urine
 - belly pain on the right side
 - light colored bowel movements
 - skin or white of eyes turn yellow
 - bleeds easily
 - easy bruising or any bruises on the skin

When to call for emergency help

Call for emergency help if your child has any of the following after taking a medicine:

- Trouble breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling of hands, feet or ankles.

Other advice about medicines in general

- Tell your child's health care provider and pharmacist if your child has a strange or allergic reaction to any medicine.
- If you carry medicine in your purse, keep it in its childproof bottle and keep your purse out of the reach of children.
- Ask your pharmacist for two labeled bottles if your daycare provider will be giving this medicine.
- Bring all your child's medicines with you in the original bottles whenever your child sees a doctor, goes to an emergency room or is admitted to the hospital. This helps doctors and health care providers who may not know your child.
- Learn the name, spelling and dose of the medicines. Also, teach your child if they are old enough. You will need to know this information when you call the doctor or pharmacist.
- If your child takes too much of any medicine, or if someone else takes your child's medicine, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 614-228-2272). They will tell you what to do.
- Do not use this medicine if the package has been opened or if the plastic seal or safety wrap is broken before you use it the first time.
- When this medicine is no longer needed, mix the leftover medicine with an unwanted material like coffee grounds or kitty litter. Place the mixture into a container or a bag that will not leak. Then, throw it away in the trash where children and pets cannot reach it.