

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)



- are medicines that are widely used to relieve pain, reduce inflammation, and bring down a high temperature
- often used to relieve symptoms of headaches, painful periods, sprains and strains, colds and flu, arthritis, and other causes of long-term pain.

WHAT DOSE SHOULD I TAKE?

- Different NSAIDs and doses work for different people.
- You may have to try one or more until you find one which works for you.
- The dose of NSAID may be increased slowly every few weeks. This will depend on your response and any side effects you experience.
- When your pain is under control you may be advised to reduce or stop your anti-inflammatory medication.



ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?



- All medications can cause side effects but not everyone will get them.



- The most common side effects with NSAIDs are irritation of the stomach causing indigestion like symptoms or a feeling of sickness.

- This can be made less by remembering to take your NSAID with or after food. You may also be prescribed a medication (Omeprazole, or Pantoprazole) to help lessen the risk of stomach problems. You should take this medication every day whilst you are taking a NSAID.
- If you have asthma, a heart condition, high blood pressure, kidney problems or have had previous stomach ulcers or bleeding you should let your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist know before taking an NSAID.



HOW LONG SHOULD I TAKE NSAIDS FOR?

- This varies for different people.
- In general, they will have to be taken for as long as you require relief for inflammatory type pain.
- This should be regularly reviewed to ensure benefit to pain control is more than any side effects or risks.
- **The overall aim is to use the lowest effective dose for the shortest period of time.**
- Side effects are more likely when the medication is used for a long period of time or in large doses.
- Many chronic pain conditions (e.g. Osteoarthritis) only have inflammatory pain part of time. Other medications which are paracetamol- based may give better pain relief.
- You can then add an NSAID during inflammatory “flare-up” when you are experiencing symptoms of swelling and heat.
- Some rheumatology conditions, such as Ankylosing Spondylitis, may require longer-term use of anti-inflammatory medications.



OTHER INFORMATION

- If you are breastfeeding, pregnant or likely to become pregnant, you should let your doctor or pharmacist know.



- NSAIDs may be linked with reduced fertility which resolves on stopping.
- NSAIDs can interact with many other medications. These include warfarin, lithium and many drugs used in the treatment of high blood pressure.



- You should never buy other medications over the counter without telling the pharmacist that you are taking a NSAID.

