





RAISING AWARENESS OF

HIDDEN DANGERS OF OVER-THE-COUNTER PAIN RELIEVERS


NONPRESCRIPTION MEDICINES ARE NOT WITHOUT RISKS. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

MKS HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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A large number of people, when they fall sick, do not consult the physician and consume over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Everyone thinks that he or she is a medical authority, and if we have a fever, cold, cough, constipation or indigestion, our friends or even total strangers volunteer advice on medicines to take like expert physicians. Almost everyone we meet has an excellent remedy for whatever ails we have. Also, pharmacy and hypermarket shelves are overflowing with options for pain relief. There are packages of pills, patches, creams and liquids – all designed to alleviate everyday aches and injuries.



In short, this is what is meant by self-medication. Maybe most of the times nothing untoward happens on following such advice, but it can be dangerous and if something is sold without a prescription does not mean it is risk-free. Medicines are important to help us get cured at the right time. But popping medicines on our own, without the doctor's consult can become fatal.

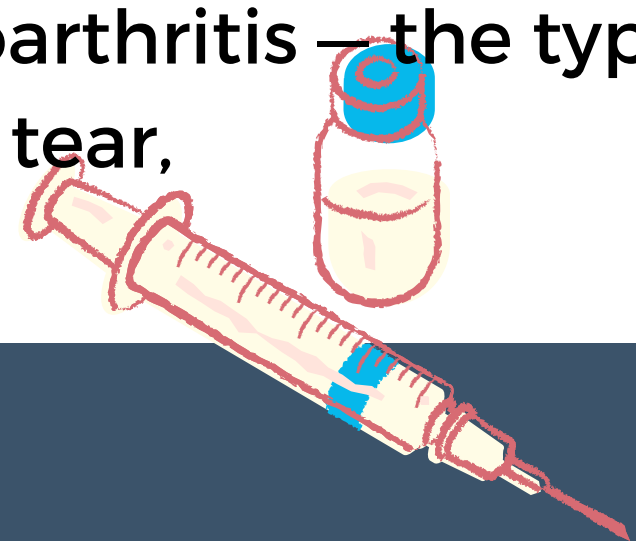


The present youth will be the backbone of future Bahrain. They are carefree never giving a thought for their coming future. They have the ability to learn and acquire knowledge from their surrounding but do not have the intelligence to distinguish between evil and good. Thus the youth is more prone to habits whether good or bad, but they tend to learn bad habits faster than the good ones as they are easy to follow. Among many bad habits one of the dangerous habits is that of self-medication.





Here's what you need to know before you pop an over-the-counter (OTC) pain reliever and self-medication.

ACETAMINOPHEN OR PARACETAMOL



Acetaminophen, also known by the brand name **PANADOL**, is one of the most commonly used drugs in Bahrain. and is the top recommended OTC pain relief option for most young people and adults. It can be used to ease headaches and muscle aches and to reduce fever. It is also good for treating osteoarthritis – the type of arthritis that comes from everyday wear and tear,



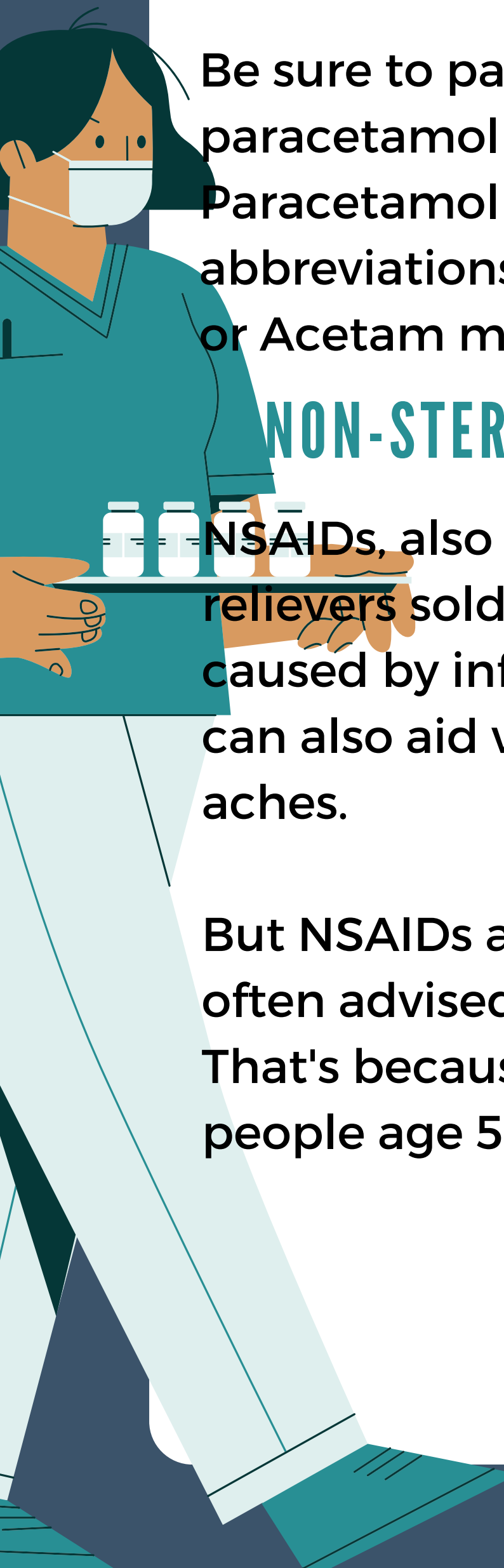

But because too much paracetamol can cause liver damage, certain people should reduce their dosage or avoid it altogether. Talk to your doctor before taking panadol if you have a liver disease.

Otherwise, as long as your overall daily dose is under 3,000 milligrams, (in a 24-hour cycle), it is usually fairly safe. Taking a higher dose than recommended will not provide more relief, but can be dangerous.




THE DANGER IS OFTEN DISGUISED

But keeping your daily dose under 3,000 milligrams per day can be tricky, especially since paracetamol shows up in hundreds of other medications, including OTC cold and flu relief and allergy medicines. Some people could easily be exceeding the daily dose without even realizing it by taking two different medications.




Be sure to pay close attention to the label, as overdosing on paracetamol is the most common cause of drug-related liver injury. Paracetamol or acetaminophen is not always spelled out; abbreviations such as APAP, Acetaminoph, Acetaminop, Acetamin or Acetam may be used instead.

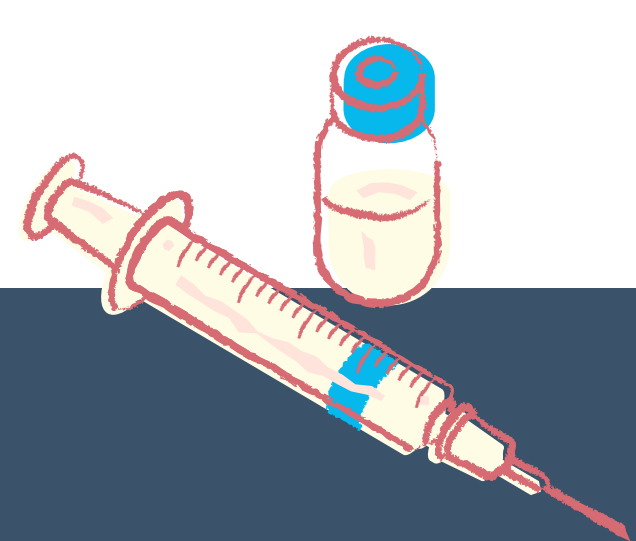
NON-STEROIDAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS (NSAIDS)



NSAIDs, also known as **IBUPROFEN** are another class of pain relievers sold over the counter. They are helpful at reducing pain caused by inflammation – like arthritis or an athletic injury – and can also aid with fevers and mild pain from headaches and muscle aches.




But NSAIDs are not recommended for everyone, and older adults are often advised to avoid them, or at least use them with caution. That's because they can come with a list of increased risks for people age 50-plus.






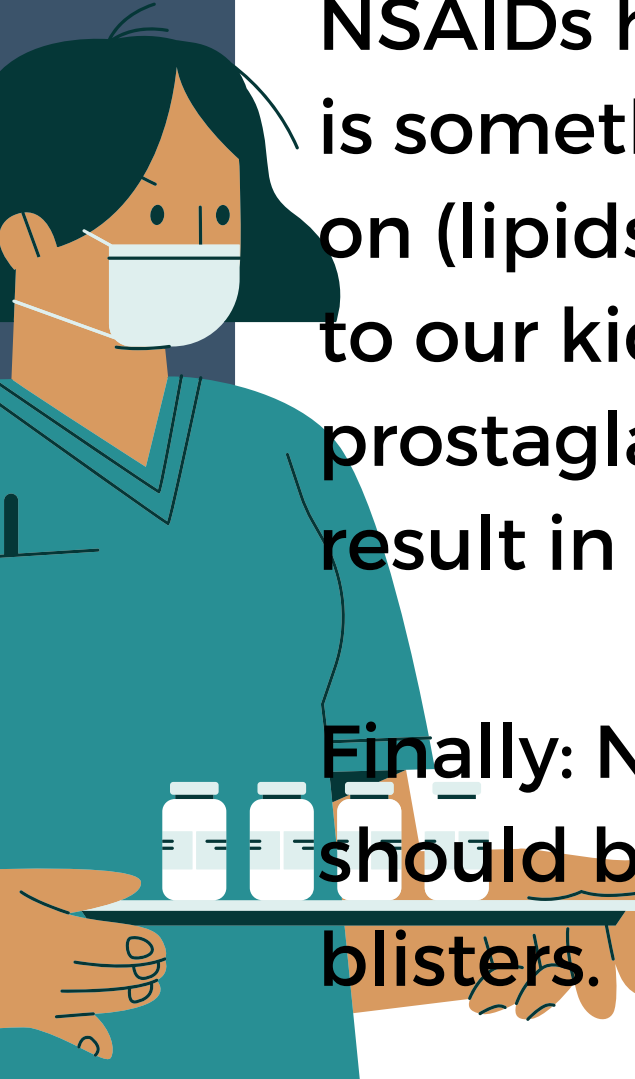

BLEEDING, HEART PROBLEMS AND OTHER HIDDEN DANGERS



Use of NSAIDs can cause bleeding in the stomach or in the digestive tract, which can come on without warning signs and can be serious. People who take NSAIDs every day or regularly are at increased risk for these adverse events. The risk is also higher for adults older than 65 years old, people with a history of stomach ulcers, and people who take blood thinners like warfarin or corticosteroids, such as prednisone.




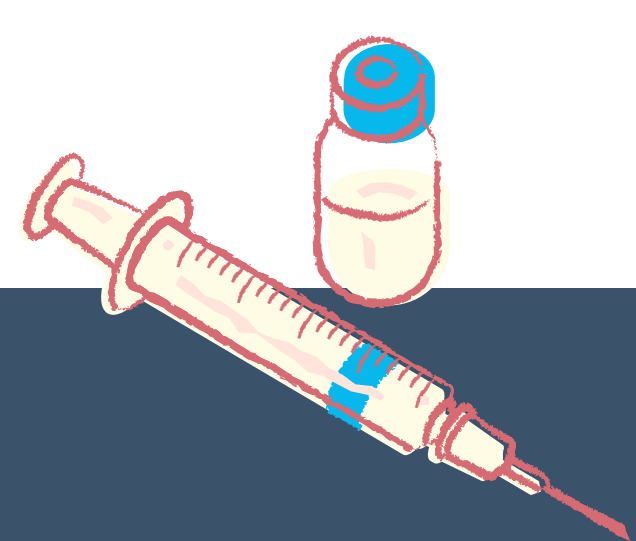
Adults with blood pressure problems should know that NSAIDs can raise blood pressure. And all NSAIDs, except for aspirin, can increase chances of heart attack or stroke, even after the first few weeks of use. People who have cardiovascular disease are at highest risk.



NSAIDs have also been linked to kidney injury in older adults, which is something I really worry about, too. As we age, we really depend on (lipids in the body called) prostaglandins to keep the blood flow to our kidneys. And the way NSAIDs work is they inhibit those prostaglandins, causing the blood vessels to constrict, which can result in kidney injury.

Finally: NSAIDs carry the risk of potential skin reactions. Patients should be on the lookout for symptoms of skin reddening, rash or blisters.

So you really want to leave NSAIDs as kind of your last choice, which is interesting, because most people go to these first. But when you are over 50, this one needs to start moving down the list, versus something like a Panadol.





TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR AND PHARMACIST

The key takeaway to OTC pain medication is to keep your health care provider in the loop especially that there are now more and more prescription-strength medications that are over the counter and the package inserts are really difficult to understand.

A QUICK ADVICE



Bring a list of everything you are taking, including your supplements and your over-the-counter medication to your health care provider at least once a year.

And remember: If you are stumped in the medicine aisle, check in with the pharmacist for guidance.

