

CONSUMER Health ALERT!



NUTRITIONAL FRONTIERS



THE DANGERS OF OVER-THE-COUNTER PAIN MEDICATIONS

According to the July 1998 issue of The American Journal of Medicine:

- 107,000 patients are hospitalized annually for nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)-related gastrointestinal (GI) complications (Conservative calculations estimation)
- At least 16,500 NSAID-related deaths occur each year among arthritis patients alone.

(The figures of all NSAID users would be overwhelming, yet the scope of this problem is generally under-appreciated.)¹

Pain medications known as NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) are associated with numerous serious side effects. NSAIDs are medications used to reduce inflammation and pain. They work by blocking the action of the COX (cyclooxygenase) enzymes resulting in reduced prostaglandin production. Over-the-counter NSAIDs include aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), diclofenac, and naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve).

Prostaglandins are substances that perform numerous important roles influencing virtually every organ in the body. There are three types of prostaglandins: PG1, PG2, and PG3. PG1 and PG3 are considered the “good” prostaglandins while PG2 are labeled “bad” prostaglandins. The PG1 series of prostaglandins act to decrease blood pressure, reduce inflammation, improve the function of certain immune cells, relax blood vessels, improve nerve function, inhibit blood clotting, and prevent the release of arachidonic acid from cells.

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And again a year later (June 1999) in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine there is a similar statement:

“It has been estimated conservatively that 16,500 NSAID-related deaths occur among patients with rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis every year in the United States. This figure is similar to the number of deaths from the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and considerably greater than the number of deaths from multiple myeloma, asthma, cervical cancer, or Hodgkin’s disease. If deaths from gastrointestinal toxic effects from NSAIDs were tabulated separately in the National Vital Statistics reports, these effects would constitute the 15th most common cause of death in the United States. Yet these toxic effects remain mainly a “silent epidemic,” with many physicians and most patients unaware of the magnitude of the problem. Furthermore the mortality statistics do not include deaths ascribed to the use of over-the-counter NSAIDS.”²

What these journal articles are stating is shocking. Over 100,000 people are hospitalized for GI bleeding and of those 16,500 die every year. And these values are considered “conservative”. Also the figures only include prescription NSAIDs used to treat only arthritis and only in the United States. If prescription and over the counter NSAID-related hospitalizations and death rates were counted for not only arthritis, but for all conditions, and throughout the world, the figures would no doubt be enormous. Taking those figures and applying them over the many years that this class of drug that has been available since the early 1970s and the numbers would be horrific. And yet, no study to date has attempted to quantify these figures. A graph from the same article shows this alarming statistic relative to other causes of deaths.



PG2 prostaglandins promote inflammation, platelet aggregation (blood clotting), sodium retention, constriction of blood vessels, pain, and fever. In many respects these are all normal, biological responses to insults like injuries and infections. For example, these functions are vital when a person suffers a wound so that he or she does not bleed to death. However, in excess this class of prostaglandins can be harmful, especially to someone with heart disease.

NSAIDs like aspirin and ibuprofen are non-selective inhibitors of COX enzymes, meaning they inhibit all 3 of the prostaglandin series. This across-the-board reduction in COX activity results in several harmful side effects. Since prostaglandins also protect the lining of the stomach and intestines as well as promote blood clotting, predictably some of the side effects of NSAIDs include damage to the digestive tract, heartburn (reflux), irritation of the stomach lining, peptic ulcers, and excessive bleeding. Another adverse effect of these types of medications is kidney failure.

There is a class of prescription drugs called COX-2 inhibitors which includes Vioxx, Bextra, Celebrex (celecoxib), and Mobic (meloxicam). The first two are no longer used in the USA due to dangerous side effects. COX-2 inhibitors target only one type of enzyme involved in prostaglandin synthesis, thereby resulting in a reduction of some of the side effects associated with NSAIDs.

However, while COX-2 inhibitors do not cause the gastric irritation described above, they are associated with increased risk for serious cardiovascular problems like heart attack, stroke and, atrial fibrillation/flutter. Like the other NSAIDs, they also the risk of causing renal failure. Furthermore, even ibuprofen and diclofenac in high doses are associated with increased risk of these cardiovascular problems. Those people at greatest risk of an adverse cardiovascular event from use of these drugs are those who are age 80 or older, those with prior heart attack, previously existing cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, rheumatoid, arthritis, chronic renal disease, and/or COPD.

Natural Pain Relief & Natural Anti-inflammatory agents

Nutritional Frontiers offers several options for relieving inflammation and its effects such as **X-Flame**, **Omega 3 & 6 Fatty Acid formulations**, **CybZyme**, **ProbZyme** and **BetaZyme**, and **HA Plus**.

- Select ingredients in **X-Flame** have been researched and proven to reduce pain and swelling, increase mobility, and decrease the need for over-the-counter pain medication. X-Flame contains Kre-Celazine®, DMG HCl, Turmeric, Boswellia serrata, Ginger, Quercetin, Rutin, Luteolin (from Perilla Leaf Extract), and Cayenne.
- Nutritional Frontiers has several **Omega 3 & 6 Fatty Acid products**, including DHA Chews, Krill Oil, Omega 3D and Omega 3D Liquid, Omega E.C., Omega Synergy, and Frontier Flax.
- When taken with meals, digestive enzymes provide support for the digestion and absorption of food. When taken between meals, however, digestive enzymes can help reduce inflammation. Nutritional Frontiers offers several digestive enzyme formulations: **CybZyme**, **BetaZyme**, and **ProbZyme**.
- **HA Plus** and **HA Plus Liquid** are excellent supplements to assist in joint repair and increase joint comfort. HA stands for Hyaluronic acid, which is a substance found through the body especially in cartilage, synovial fluid, skin, and the eye. It supports connective tissue structures. HA Plus also contains Glucosamine sulfate and MSM (methylsulfonylmethane) which are well known to support joint health and proper joint function.



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