

# NONSTEROIDAL ANTIINFLAMMATORY DRUGS



NORTH AMERICAN  
SPINE SOCIETY  
PUBLIC EDUCATION  
SERIES

## NONSTEROIDAL ANTI- INFLAMMATORY DRUGS (NSAIDS)

Your health care provider has recommended that you take a nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drug (NSAID) as part of your treatment for a musculoskeletal problem. Please read this information carefully in order to obtain the most benefit and least risk of any problems from the medication.

If you have any concerns or questions about any of the information in this pamphlet, check with your health care provider. Keep this and all other medication out of the reach of children.

## COMMON USES

NSAIDs are used to treat pain in a number of medical conditions. They are also used to treat inflammation, which often produces or worsens pain by causing stiffness and swelling. Some NSAIDs are available without a doctor's prescription ("over the counter" or OTC medications). These include aspirin, low dose (200 mg) ibuprofen (Advil<sup>®</sup>, Motrin<sup>®</sup>, Nuprin<sup>®</sup>, etc) and low dose naproxen (Aleve<sup>®</sup>, etc). They are safe and effective medications for the vast majority of patients taking them in appropriate doses. Other NSAIDs are only available with a doctor's prescription.

## BEFORE USING NSAIDS

1. Carefully read all the directions.
2. Follow any advice and/or precautions.
3. Do not take this medicine if you have ever had any unusual or allergic reactions to aspirin, any over the counter NSAIDs or any other medicine used to treat pain, fever, swelling or arthritis.
4. Make sure that the medication is compatible with any other medications you are taking. Check with your health care provider or pharmacist if you don't know.
5. Check with your health care provider if you are pregnant, intend to become pregnant or are breast feeding.
6. Notify your health care provider if you have any bleeding or blood clotting problems.
7. Consult with your health care provider if you have a history of gastrointestinal bleeding or ulcer before taking NSAIDs.
8. Notify your health care provider if you have a history of gastrointestinal bleeding or ulcer before taking NSAIDs.
9. Using NSAIDs may increase your risk for developing adverse cardiovascular effects. Check with your health care provider if you have high blood pressure, history of heart attack or other cardiovascular conditions.

## HOW TO USE NSAIDS

1. Use only as directed by your health care provider.
2. Take NSAIDs with food and a full glass of water (8 oz). You may also take them with antacids.
3. Take only for the prescribed time period recommended by your health care provider.
4. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible with food and water. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule. Do NOT double dose.

## PRECAUTIONS WHILE USING NSAIDS

1. If you take NSAIDs for prolonged periods (months), make sure you have regular check-ups by your health care provider.
2. Notify your healthcare provider if you regularly consume alcoholic beverages. Your medications may need to be modified.
3. Serious side effects resulting in severe and even life-threatening illness (from such problems as bleeding ulcers and others) can occur without warning.
4. Do not take other NSAIDs, including over the counter NSAIDs (Advil, Nuprin, Aleve) and aspirin, with this prescription. Continuing the use of daily single low dose aspirin compounds for prevention of cardiovascular conditions is usually acceptable.
5. NSAIDs can also affect other medical conditions such as high blood pressure, kidney problems, asthma and others. Make sure you have informed your healthcare provider about **all** your medical problems and **all** the medications you take (prescription and over the counter, including vitamins and homeopathic compounds) before taking this new medication.
6. Since some NSAIDs can cause drowsiness; make sure you know how you react to the NSAID before operating machinery or other jobs that require you to be alert.

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

There are a number of mild problems that can be associated with NSAID use. Mild nausea, indigestion or heartburn can be common and are often prevented by taking the medication on a full stomach with plenty of water. Other mild side effects include mild diarrhea and mild lightheadedness and /or drowsiness. These mild side effects will usually go away. However, if they continue or are bothersome, check with your health care provider and stop taking the medication.

Although rare, severe side effects can occur with NSAID use that affect many different organ systems. You should immediately stop taking the medication and contact your health care provider if you notice any of the following:

1. Severe nausea, heartburn or abdominal pain;
2. Bloody or black tarry stools;
3. Vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds;
4. Recurrent nose bleeds or bleeding from the mouth or gums or other unusual bleeding;
5. Easy and severe bruising;
6. Hives or swelling of the face, eyelids, mouth, lips or tongue;
7. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
8. Wheezing;
9. Tightness in the chest or chest pain;
10. Sudden, unexplained weight gain;
11. Sudden decrease in the amount of urine;
12. Convulsions or seizures;
13. Elevated blood pressure.

A stylized, graphic illustration of a human spine, showing vertebrae and intervertebral discs, rendered in a light blue and white color scheme against a purple background. The illustration is positioned on the right side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT:

NORTH AMERICAN SPINE SOCIETY  
22 CALENDAR COURT, 2ND FLOOR  
LAGRANGE, IL 60525  
PHONE (877) 774-6337  
FAX (708) 588-1080

VISIT US ON THE INTERNET AT:  
[WWW.SPINE.ORG](http://WWW.SPINE.ORG)

## DISCLAIMER

The information in this pamphlet is selective and does not cover all possible uses, actions, precautions, side effects or interactions of NSAIDs. If you have any questions contact your healthcare provider for more information. This brochure is for general information and understanding only and is not intended to represent official policy of the North American Spine Society. Please consult your healthcare provider for specific information about your condition.

© 2006 North American Spine Society