

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Annie Guillet, DC

How Safe Are Over-the-Counter Medications?

Think over-the-counter medications are safe? Think again. Even the seemingly benign class of medications called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) has serious health risks. (NSAIDs include aspirin, ketoprofen (Orudis®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin® and Nuprin®).) According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 76,000 people are hospitalized each year due to adverse reactions to NSAIDs. And, an estimated 7,600 will die this year alone as a direct result of NSAIDs. Before you pop another pill, read on to learn how dangerous these medications can be and where to turn for safer alternatives.



Get to the Root of the Problem

One of the biggest hazards of NSAIDs is that they usually only suppress pain and inflammation, without addressing the fundamental problem. They "mask" your pain temporarily, forcing you to continue taking them and living with their potential side effects. Escape this vicious cycle by visiting Dr. Guillet. In contrast to NSAIDs, chiropractors, like Dr. Guillet, "unmask" your pain; they concentrate on the causes of health issues, not the symptoms.

Specifically, chiropractors work to eliminate spinal problems called vertebral subluxations. These dysfunctional areas in the spine result from restrictions in motion or bones (vertebrae) that are out of alignment. Vertebral subluxations have been linked with a myriad of conditions, including back and neck pain and headaches. Dr. Guillet uses safe, gentle and effective maneuvers called chiropractic adjustments to

This week, take a moment to give somebody special the gift of health.



Common Side Effects of NSAIDs

- Dizziness
- Skin Rash
- Nausea
- Heartburn
- Abdominal Cramps/Pain
- Fluid Retention
- Indigestion
- Constipation
- Rectal Bleeding
- Rectal Irritation
- Edema
- Headache
- Bloating or Gas
- Diarrhea
- Nervousness or Irritability
- Gastrointestinal Irritation
- Vomiting
- Stomach Pain

restore motion to the spine and remove vertebral subluxations.

But how does chiropractic compare to NSAIDs in terms of pain relief? One study, which compared chiropractic to NSAIDs, concluded that, "There is no evidence that indicates NSAID use is any more effective than cervical manipulation [chiropractic adjustment] for neck pain" (*Journal of Manipulative & Physiologic Therapeutics* 1996; 18:530-6).

**Dr. Annie Guillet, DC, Wellness Care on Collins (03) 9650 8488
38 / 12 Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000**

Just how bad are the side effects of NSAIDs? The following is an outline of several conditions caused by these pain relievers.

Stomach Stress

You may have heard that NSAIDs can cause stomach problems — but you may not know just how widespread or how serious this problem is. According to the United States Food and Drug Administration, 10,000 to 20,000 deaths each year are a direct result of severe gastrointestinal bleeding caused by NSAIDs. And, you don't have to take NSAIDs for long to experience the gastrointestinal changes that precede ulcers. In one study, 24 healthy subjects between the ages of 18 and 65 took Orudis KT® (ketoprofen) for seven days. Investigators found that 50% of subjects developed severe gastric mucosal injury. And, two patients formed gastric ulcers. The study's authors concluded that "even at lower (OTC) doses (75mg/day) ketoprofen is associated with significant gastrointestinal irritation" (*American Journal of Gastroenterology* 1998; 93:1051-4).

Another study compared 76 patients with gastrointestinal ulcers with 152 healthy controls. A total of 71% of ulcer patients showed evidence of NSAID use. In contrast, only 26.9% of controls had taken NSAIDs. The study concluded that, "NSAID use is strongly associated with an increased risk of both upper and lower gastrointestinal perforation" (*Gastroenterology* 1997; 112:683-689).

Pressure Problems

Did you know that NSAIDs might raise your blood pressure? A review study in the journal *Drug Safety* found that, "Recent NSAID users had a 1.7-fold higher risk of requiring the initiation of antihypertensive therapy compared with nonusers; NSAID users also had a 40% increased risk of receiving a diagnosis of hypertension compared with nonusers." In general, NSAID use increased blood pressure by 5mg/Hg.

And, this effect was more pronounced in subjects being treated for high blood pressure (*Drug Safety* 1997; 17:277-289).

Cataract Concerns

Cataracts are a major health concern. Yet, most people are unaware that NSAIDs may increase the likelihood of this visual impairment. According to a study involving 3,654 people, aspirin can nearly double the risk of posterior subcapsular cataracts if taken on a regular basis for more than 10 years (*Ophthalmology* 1998;105:1751-58).

Headache Helpers

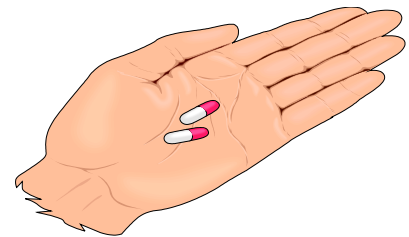
The very over-the-counter medications touted by drug companies as "headache relievers" may actually cause headaches! Consistent use of drugs — including NSAIDs — can produce a condition known as analgesic-rebound headache. ("Analgesic" means "pain reliever.") And no one is immune to this disorder; it affects adults as well as children (*Journal of Childhood Neurology* 1998; 13:443-7). According to the American Association for the Study of Headache, analgesic-rebound headache, "is a phenomenon associated with daily or near-daily use of analgesics and sometimes with excessive daily consumption of caffeine. Headache recurs as each dose of medication wears off, prompting the patient to overuse medication and to perpetuate the rebound effect." Experts also speculate that persistent use of painkillers may cause changes in the brain, resulting in a lowered pain threshold. What's even more alarming is that drug-rebound headache isn't a rare occurrence. According to the American Association for the Study of Headache, "Analgesic rebound headache is one of the most common causes of chronic daily headache."

Now, you're probably thinking — if this condition is so widespread, why hasn't everybody heard of it? Unfortunately, we live in a pro-drug society — and rebound headaches are frequently misdiagnosed. Help

spread the word — encourage somebody you suspect is suffering from drug-rebound headaches to have a chiropractic consultation. Doctors of chiropractic are trained to detect analgesic-rebound headache and offer natural approaches for recovery.

Kidney Caution

NSAIDs can lead to a kidney disease called membranous nephropathy (MN). This common disorder, which can result in total kidney failure, usually affects middle-aged men. In one study, researchers found that NSAID use caused MN in 10.4% of patients with the disease (*Journal of the American Medical Association* 1996; 276:466-69).



Why Risk It?

Are you tired of risking dangerous side-effects popping pills in an attempt to quell pain? Your chiropractor can help. Chiropractic offers effective non-drug strategies for relieving pain. So, next time you feel like popping a pain reliever, pick up the phone instead and call your chiropractor!

Optimal Health University™ is a professional service of PreventiCare Publishing®. The information and recommendations appearing on these pages are appropriate in most instances; but they are not a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. Optimal Health University™ may be reproduced in print exactly as they are published non-commercially by current subscribers ONLY to share with patients or potential patients. Individuals not currently subscribing to Optimal Health University™ may NOT reproduce, distribute or post Optimal Health University™. Any other reproductions are subject to PreventiCare Publishing® approval. Copyright, 1999, PreventiCare Publishing®. 1-912-897-3040 or 1-800-500-6050.