

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR ANTI-INFLAMMATORY (NSAID) MEDICATION BEFORE YOU BEGIN TAKING IT

While your medication has been prescribed to HELP you (i.e., reduce swelling, excess joint fluid, inflammation and related pain) it can sometimes cause unwanted and rarely dangerous side-effects. **Always take your anti-inflammatory medication with food and lots of water, i.e., NOT with an empty stomach.** Be aware of, and look out for:

- A. **Stomach pain and/or upset (“heartburn”), and occasional diarrhea:** If this occurs just stop your medicine and let us know. We may recommend a different medication.
- B. **Significant G.I. bleeding from ulceration, often with no warning symptoms:** This is not a particularly common problem but can be expected to occur a few percent of the time. If your stool color darkens and/or you feel weak and anemic for no apparent reason, stop your medicine, see your general medical doctor immediately and let us know as well. We can do blood testing for anemia right here at our office.
- C. **Interaction with “blood thinner” (anti-coagulant) medicines:** Do not take anti-inflammatory medicine if you are also on or are going to be taking Coumadin or other blood thinners such as Heparin, Lovenox or Arixtra, unless you have the specific permission of the physician who is prescribing your anti-coagulation therapy. Taking low-dose aspirin for heart attack/stroke prevention, at the same time as you are taking an anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medication will dramatically increase your risk of GI ulceration. We advise that you consult with your doctor to see if your low dose aspirin cannot be temporarily discontinued.
- D. **Body fluid retention and/or increased blood pressure:** If you develop noticeable swelling in both of your lower legs (i.e., not just one) or increased blood pressure when taking this medication, stop taking it and check with both your family/primary care physician and us. Even small (3 to 5 mmHg) increases in blood pressure will increase your risk of stroke, myocardial infarction (heart attack), congestive heart failure and death. Most of the time, leg swelling is due to other causes but it is better to be cautious and at least temporarily stop your anti-inflammatory medicine until the actual cause can be found. Patients with kidney or liver disease should check with their primary care physician before taking any anti-inflammatory medications. ALL patients taking these medications should have their blood pressure checked every 2 to 4 weeks.
- E. **Easy bruising and/or slow blood clotting:** Not all anti-inflammatory medications cause this, so if this becomes a problem let us know so that we can change your medication.
- F. **Allergic Reaction:** Like any medication, anti-inflammatories can provoke an allergic reaction in a very few people, especially those with a known history of allergy to aspirin. Reactions may include hives, itching, skin rash, facial swelling, breathing difficulty and rarely a life-threatening combination of reactions known as anaphylaxis. If you have asthma and/or a known history of genuine allergy to aspirin (note: G.I. upset is not generally considered an “allergic” reaction) you should **not** take any anti-inflammatory medicine that you don’t already know for sure you can tolerate (by past experience). If you do develop any of the above allergic reactions in response to your anti-inflammatory medicine you should stop taking it and let us and your primary care physician know, immediately. If you develop facial swelling and particularly difficulty breathing, you must receive immediate medical attention! Call “911” if necessary.
- G. **Other, rarer side-effects** (too numerous to list here) are also possible, so if you experience any unusual symptoms or abnormal body signs, stop your medication and check with us and your primary physician.

SOME COMMON ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICATIONS:

Aspirin	Advil (Ibuprofen)	Mobic	Feldene
Motrin (Ibuprofen)	Cataflam	Relafen	
Aleve (Naproxen)	Indomethacin (Indocin)	Clinoril	
Naprosyn	Voltaren	Celebrex	} <i>should not be taken if you are allergic to sulfonamide medications</i>
Salsalate (Disalcid)	Ketorolac (Toradol)	Bextra	

*No medication of any kind should be taken without physician approval if pregnancy is a possibility. Interaction between anti-inflammatory medicines and medications given to you by other physicians can occasionally occur. If you are taking other medications, check with your prescribing physician(s) to see if they have any objection to you taking the anti-inflammatory you have been given. Keep all medications out of the reach of children.