

INFORMATION TO PATIENTS

Commonly prescribed medications for the treatment of headache disorders

Paracetamol and Ibuprofen

How do these tablets work?

Paracetamol and ibuprofen are widely available pain killers and most people use them without prescription to treat different painful conditions including headache and migraine. Both paracetamol and ibuprofen are available in several formats including tablets, capsules and in liquid preparations.

Paracetamol is a useful pain-killer which alleviates the pain component of migraine.

Ibuprofen is an anti-inflammatory drug, which reduces the inflammation and has analgesic properties.

When should they be taken?

Paracetamol and Ibuprofen should be taken as early as possible after onset of headache for maximum benefit. The earlier you treat your headache the more likely to be successful.

How should I take them?

- The first dose of paracetamol should be in the region of 20 mg/kg, so if your weight is over 50 Kg you should take 2 tablets (Paracetamol 500mg each). If a repeat dose is needed after 4-6 hours, you take a smaller dose of 10-15 mg/kg (1-1.5 tablets)
- The dose of Ibuprofen can be 10 mg/kg (up to 400 mg) and can be repeated every 4-6 hours
- It is rarely needed to take the two medications at the same time.
- If vomiting is a problem ask your doctor for an anti-emetic medication or/and anti-inflammatory suppositories.

Do these tablets have any side effects?

- All tablets have a number of listed side effects which you will find in the medication packets. However, side effects are rare.

Do these tablets interfere with any other medication I might take during an attack?

These tablets don't interfere with other migraine medication which can be taken in addition if needed.

How many times a week can I take them?

If paracetamol and ibuprofen are taken too frequently there is a danger that they can cause overuse headache. If you are taking them on more than 2-3 days a week then you should discuss further options with your doctor.