



ACETAMINOPHEN VS. IBUPROFEN

Tylenol® (acetaminophen) and Advil® (ibuprofen). We couldn't live without these over-the-counter remedies for headache, backache, fever, sore throat or cramps. Find out if your go-to medicine is the right choice for what you need and if you're using it correctly.



ROUND 1: POINTS AWARDED

ACETAMINOPHEN		IBUPROFEN
	FIGHTS FEVER	✓ Better for fever, studies suggest
✓ Better for headache and arthritis	EASES PAIN	✓ Better for menstrual cramps
✓	SOOTHES SORE THROAT	✓
	EASES INFLAMMATION	✓ Better for sinusitis, backache, muscle soreness, earache and toothache
✓	EASY ON THE WALLET	✓

ROUND 2: POINTS DEDUCTED

✗ Taking too much at once can damage your liver, perhaps permanently	TOXICITY	✗ Prolonged use can lead to kidney damage, heart attack and stroke
Minimal (except for rare, potentially fatal skin reactions; seek help promptly for rash or blisters)	SIDE EFFECTS	✗ Severe stomach bleeding (ulcers), heartburn, GI upset, constipation
✗ In more than 150 cough & cold, allergy, pain, sleep and other products; check all labels for acetaminophen or APAP	HIDDEN DANGERS	✗ Avoid before and after heart surgery; do not use if you're allergic to aspirin, naproxen (Aleve®) or other NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)

JUDGE'S DECISION:



IT'S A DRAW!



TRY ALTERNATING DOSES

Ibuprofen is champion against fever, pain and inflammation, while acetaminophen is better at fighting arthritis and headache. But acetaminophen is safer than ibuprofen for most of us if we don't take too much. To minimize risks and maximize benefits, doctors suggest switching between the two if possible, because they are metabolized differently. And remember: Always take the smallest effective dose for the shortest amount of time.

Don't overdo acetaminophen

Read labels on all over-the-counter products to stay within the new daily limit: 3,250 mg. That equals 10 regular or 6 extra-strength acetaminophen pills per day. Add acetaminophen in multi-symptom products to the daily total. Avoid acetaminophen if you have 3 or more alcoholic drinks a day. For higher doses, talk to your doctor.

Use caution with ibuprofen

Check with your doctor before starting. Bleeding risks increase if you are over 60, have ulcers, take blood thinners, steroids or other NSAIDs, or have 3 or more alcoholic drinks a day. Check if ibuprofen is safe when you're pregnant or breastfeeding. Note: Ibuprofen lowers daily aspirin's protective effective against heart attack and stroke.

EXTRA ROUND

Allergy warning!

Stop taking ibuprofen or any other medicine immediately and seek help if you experience an allergic reaction. This may affect your skin (rash, hives, itching, redness, blistering, peeling) or your airways (wheezing, tight chest and throat, difficulty breathing or speaking), or make your face, lips, mouth, tongue or throat swell.