

Pain relief in children

Information for parents and carers

This leaflet is about how to give pain relief to your child.

Paracetamol for children (often called Calpol)

Paracetamol is a common painkiller for children with mild to moderate pain (for example headaches and stomach aches). It can also be used to treat a temperature over 38°C. Calpol is one brand of paracetamol, but others are available. Your child should start to feel better about 30 minutes after taking paracetamol. Do not give paracetamol to babies younger than 3 months old unless you have been advised to by a healthcare professional.

How often should I give paracetamol?

You should wait at least 4 to 6 hours between doses of paracetamol. Give no more than 4 doses of paracetamol in 24 hours.

What if my child has too much paracetamol?

If you give your child 1 extra dose of paracetamol by mistake, wait at least 24 hours before giving them any more. If you are in any doubt, you should contact 111 for advice.

Ibuprofen for children (can be called Nurofen, Calprofen, Brufen)

Ibuprofen is a common painkiller for children with mild to moderate pain. It can also be used to treat a temperature over 38°C. Nurofen, Calprofen and Brufen are brand names for Ibuprofen, but others are available. It is best to give ibuprofen with food, so it doesn't upset your child's tummy. Your child should start to feel better about 30 minutes after taking ibuprofen. Do not give ibuprofen to your child if they have asthma or for chicken pox, unless advised to by a healthcare professional.

How often should I give ibuprofen?

You should wait at least six hours between doses of ibuprofen. Give no more than 3 doses of ibuprofen in 24 hours.

What if my child has too much ibuprofen?

If you give your child 1 extra dose of ibuprofen by mistake, wait at least 12 hours before giving them any more. If in doubt call 111 for advice.

How much paracetamol or ibuprofen should I give?

You should follow the instructions on the bottle carefully to make sure you give the correct amount of medicine. There are different strengths of paracetamol and ibuprofen syrup available – make sure you are using the correct strength for your child's age. It can be useful to write down the time that you give each dose.

Can paracetamol and ibuprofen be given together?

Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be given together when using to treat pain and work better for pain used this way. You can also stagger them so that every few hours, if needed, the child can have some medication.

For example, you can give paracetamol at 8am, ibuprofen at 11am and paracetamol again at 2pm (i.e. 6 hours after the first dose of paracetamol). Do not give more than 4 doses of paracetamol in 24 hours. Do not give more than 3 doses of ibuprofen in 24 hours.

Medicine given to your child: Last dose of paracetamol given at: _____ next dose due at:

_____ Last dose of ibuprofen given at: _____ next dose due at: _____

