

Paracetamol

Sounds like ‘pa-ra-SEE-ta-mol’

Paracetamol is used to treat fever and pain including headache and aches and pains associated with COVID-19. It begins to work about 30 minutes after a dose is taken and the effects usually last for about 4 to 6 hours.

When taken as directed, paracetamol works well. However, it is important not to take more than the daily recommended dose. If you take too much – all at once or over a period of days – paracetamol can damage your liver.

How to take paracetamol

 Paracetamol tablets are commonly available as 500mg tablets or caplets.

 The usual dose for adults is 1 or 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain or fever.

 Always wait at least 4 hours between doses.

 Do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours OR 4 grams in 24 hours.

 Keep a record of how many doses you have taken.

Many other medicines have paracetamol in them

Some pain, cold and flu medicines also have paracetamol in them, eg, Codral®, Nuromol®, Lemsip® and Maxigesic®.

Check the ingredients of medicines carefully before you take them.

If you take other medicines that have paracetamol in them, do not take more than the recommended maximum dose of paracetamol each day (4 grams in 24 hrs).

Ask your pharmacist if you are not sure.

Paracetamol overdose is a medical emergency

If you realise you have taken too much paracetamol (including from other products with paracetamol in them), immediately call your doctor, nurse or the Poisons Centre 0800 POISON (0800 764 766).

- DO NOT WAIT for signs of overdose as these appear when the damage to your liver is already done.
- Signs of overdose include nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting (being sick), diarrhoea (runny poo), yellow skin or eyes, poor appetite, confusion or extreme sleepiness.
- Older people are most at risk, so should take extra care.

For more information about paracetamol, visit hn.org.nz/paracetamol

Brand names include:

- Panadol®
- Paracare®
- Pacimol®