

Take that! (for pain)

Here's the latest on over-the-counter fixes. By Linda Formichelli



**Acetaminophen
(Tylenol)**



**Naproxen
(Aleve)**



**Ibuprofen
(Advil)**



Aspirin

Best for	Fever and sprains	Joint pain linked to osteoarthritis and preventing mouth pain if taken before dental work	Menstrual cramps, fever, sprains, and joint pain linked to osteoarthritis	Heart health at low doses—ask your doctor if it's right for you (high doses relieve pain, but experts prefer the other choices)
Lasts	4–6 hours	8–12 hours	4–6 hours	Not applicable
May cause	Liver damage if you take high doses (more than 4,000 mg per day; that's 8 extra-strength pills) for more than a day or two	Stomach pain, heartburn, dizziness, and constipation	Stomach pain, heartburn, dizziness, and constipation	Stomach pain, heartburn, dizziness, and constipation
Keep in mind	It's easy to use too much by taking two or more meds with acetaminophen, like Tylenol Plus, NyQuil, or Benadryl Allergy/Cold, and prescriptions like Vicodin or Percocet	Take naproxen with food to lower the risk of gastrointestinal problems—but not with milk, which increases acid production in the stomach and can actually make stomach irritation worse	Take with food but not with milk. And use ibuprofen 8 hours before or at least 30 minutes after taking aspirin; otherwise, aspirin is less effective for the heart	Taking low-dose aspirin with food lowers the amount absorbed, but it doesn't eliminate the risks to your stomach