

Appendix A

Over-the-Counter Medication Usage Guidelines and Side Effects

As you have seen in this book, you are responsible for your health. An important part of self-care is the use of approved medicines. For some medicines, you need a prescription from a doctor. Other medicines can be picked up at a pharmacy without a prescription. These are called “over-the-counter” or “OTC” medications.

Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines help treat medical problems. The proper use of all medicine is your responsibility. To get the most benefit from any medicine, you must get instructions on how to use it and follow those instructions.

The following are basic questions that you should ask before taking any medications:

- What is name of this medication?
- What is it supposed to do?
- How should I take this medication?
- When should I take this medication?
- How long should I take this medication?
- Should any foods, drinks, or other medications be avoided?
- Should any activities be avoided?
- What are the possible side effects and what should I do if they occur?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?

Frequently Asked Questions

What are “over-the-counter” medications?

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications are medicines that soldiers can normally get from the pharmacy without a prescription. These OTCs can be used to treat minor medical symptoms such as a blister or sore throat. These medications are considered safe and effective when used as directed.

Is there a difference between “Generic” and “Brand” name medications?

When a manufacturer receives approval by the Food and Drug Administration to market a new prescription or OTC medication, the company will distribute that medication under a specific “brand” name. For every “brand” name for a medication, there is a universal “generic” name for that same medication. For example, acetaminophen is the generic name for the brand name Tylenol. Once the manufacturer has lost the patent rights to market a specific drug, then other pharmaceutical manufacturers can make the drug and sell it under its generic name. The FDA requires that the generic medication contain the same active ingredients as the brand name medication. Generic medications are usually less expensive than brand name medications.

How should I use OTC medications?

All OTC medications come with instructions for use. It is important that you understand the directions for use before you leave the pharmacy.

How should I store my medicines?

The best place to store medications is in a cool, dry place and out of direct sunlight. Heat and moisture are bad for many medications, which is why the bathroom is the worst place to keep medications. In the field, do your best to keep your medicines in a cool, dry place. Use a “zip-lock” plastic bag to keep at least some moisture away from your medication.

What should I do if the medication I’m taking is not helping my problem?

If the medication is not helping your problem in the expected time period or if your condition gets worse, you need to return to Sick Call.

Will vitamins, herbal-type medications, dietary supplements, or performance-enhancing drugs affect me while taking OTCs?

CAUTION: Soldiers have had bad reactions while taking these types of products, whether with an OTC or not. You should talk to your health care provider before taking any product that is not approved by the pharmacy or prescribed by a physician.

More information about dietary supplements, herbal-type medications, and performance-enhancing drugs can be found at the USACHPPM website (<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>).

Where can I obtain additional information on medications?

Your military pharmacist and healthcare team members are your primary source of medication information. Additional resources for medication specifically related to the military can be obtained on the USACHPPM website (<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>).

Be cautious of the source of medication information, especially on the Internet. Your best bet is to ask your pharmacist for good Internet sources of information.

Medication and You

- Always keep a list of all your medications. This should include prescription medicines, OTCs, and dietary supplements.
- Tell your health care providers about any drug allergies.
- Read the labels on all medications.
- Check the expiration date of any medication before using it.
- If a medication looks different than what you usually take, ask your pharmacist.
- Ask questions: It is your right and responsibility.

OTC Medications – Common Side Effects and Cautions

The following lists some of the OTC medications found in this guide. The side effects and cautions do not cover all potential issues with these medications. A more in-depth list of side effects or further explanation may be obtained from your Army Pharmacist. As with all medications, it is important that you:

- Take medications as directed.
- Not exceed the recommended doses.
- Read the label on all medications.
- Inform your healthcare provider of any problems.

Acetaminophen

High doses and constant use may cause liver damage. Alcoholic beverages increase the risk of liver damage.

Antidiarrheal

Some of the medications (loperamide) used for diarrhea may cause drowsiness and dizziness – avoid driving and other tasks which require alertness. Other medications for this condition (Kaopectate) may interfere with other medications you are taking – ask your pharmacist.

Antihistamines

Most medications used to treat a runny nose have the potential of causing drowsiness and dizziness. Avoid operating motor vehicles or machinery until you know how the medicine affects you.

Aspirin

Aspirin can cause stomach upset. This medication is best taken with 8 ounces of water or milk to ensure passage into your stomach. It can also be taken with food to help minimize any stomach upset. If you have stomach ulcers, consult a health care provider before taking aspirin. Aspirin should not be taken for a long time unless specifically directed by a health care provider. This medication is particularly sensitive to moisture – if possible, store aspirin in a cool, dry place.

Clotrimazole

This skin medication may cause some irritation or sensitivity. Any reaction should be reported to your health care provider.

Decongestants

These medications (pseudoephedrine) have the potential of causing dry mouth or nervousness. It is best to take the last dose of the day 2 to 3 hours before bedtime. If you have high blood pressure, consult a health care provider or pharmacist before taking this medication.

Ibuprofen

This medication is best taken with 8 ounces of water or milk to ensure passage into your stomach. It can also be taken with food to help

minimize any stomach upset. This medication can make you less alert – use caution until you know how the medicine affects you. Ibuprofen should not be taken for a long time unless specifically directed by a health care provider.

Appendix B

Resource List

AR 40-3, Chapter 11, Pharmacy Management
AR 600-9 Army Weight Control Program
AR 600-85 Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Program
AR 600-63 Army Health Promotion
AR 608-1 Army Community Service Center
AR 608-18 Army Family Advocacy Program
DA PAM 600-24 Suicide Prevention and Psychological Autopsy
DA PAM 600-63-7 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win –
Antitobacco Use
DA PAM 600-63-8 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win –
Substance Abuse Prevention
DA PAM 600-63-10 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win –
Stress Management
DA PAM 600-63-11 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win
– Dental Health
DA PAM 600-64-14 The Army Health Promotion Program – Your Fit to
Win Handbook
FM 21-10 Field Hygiene and Sanitation
FM 21-11 First Aid for Soldiers
FM 21-20 Physical Fitness Training
FM 3-25.20 Physical Readiness Training (Draft)
HSC PAM 40-7-21 Algorithm-Directed Troop Medical Care

American Podiatric Medical Association – Foot Care
American Sleep Disorders Association – Sleep Hygiene Practices
Chemical Splash First Aid (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and
Readiness Program, USACHPPM)
The Dark Side of Sunlight by Stephen P. Wengraitis (Laser/Optical
Radiation Program, USACHPPM)
Drug Information Handbook, 8th Edition, American Pharmaceutical
Association, 2001
Female Soldier Readiness: A Leader's Guide (Madigan Army Medical
Center and I Corps, Fort Lewis, Washington)

- Injury Control for Physically Active Men and Women by Joseph Knapik, Sc.D. (USACHPPM Directorate of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance) and Rebecca McCollam, MSA (Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, U.S. Army War College)
- Intendedness of pregnancy among active duty women in the U.S. Army. (Custer, M. - 1998. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin.)
- Memorandum for Soldiers of C Company 16th Ordnance Battalion, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Subject: Policy Letter #29, Safety
- Pharmacist's Drug Handbook, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, 2001
- Mosquito and Tick Repellants Fact Sheet (USACHPPM Entomological Sciences Program)
- Power Performance: The Nutrition Connection. (Military Nutrition Division of the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine)
- Protect Yourself from Tick-Borne Diseases (USACHPPM Entomological Sciences Program)
- Protecting the Eye in Sports (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)
- Skin and Scalp Diseases - Just the Facts (USACHPPM)
- Suicide Prevention – A Resource Manual for the U.S. Army (USACHPPM)
- Sun Protection – Questions and Facts for Soldiers (Laser/Optical Radiation Program, USACHPPM)
- Ten Commandments of Eye Safety (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)
- Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation Hazards (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)
- Tick Removal (Entomological Sciences Program, USACHPPM)
- Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases – Just the Facts (Entomological Sciences Program, USACHPPM)
- Unintended pregnancy among female soldiers presenting for prenatal care at Madigan Army Medical Center. (Clark, J. B., Holt, V. L., & Miser, F. - 1998. Military Medicine, 163, 444-448.)
- The unintended pregnancy prevention program. (Flynn, D. - 2000. The Uniformed Family Physician, Winter, 20-21.)

Unplanned pregnancy among active-duty Army females as a readiness issue. (Borsay-Trindle, L. A., Pass, C. M., & Gilzean, S. M. - 1991. Military Medicine, 156, 82-86.)

Wellness for Senior Leaders – Taking Care of Yourself: A Proactive Approach (Army Physical Fitness Research Institute)

USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion – Food Guide Pyramid

U.S. Surgeon General Report on Physical Fitness (1996)

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