

# Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

## Pain Management Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

Welcome to The Dudley Group Pain Management Service. This leaflet will provide you and your relatives with information about non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). It includes what these types of medication are used for, how they are taken and the risks of taking them.

This leaflet is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used in conjunction with what is discussed.

### What are NSAIDs and what are they used for?

They are medications used to relieve some symptoms caused by arthritis such as inflammation, swelling, stiffness and joint pain. However, this medicine does **not** cure arthritis.

They are available in various forms such as tablets, capsules, liquid medicine, creams, gel and injections. The main types of NSAIDs include ibuprofen, naproxen and diclofenac.

Some of these medicines are also used to relieve other kinds of pain, or treat other painful conditions such as:

- Sprains, strains, other injuries
- Gout – a type of arthritis where crystals form inside and around joints
- Tendonitis – inflammation of a tendon
- Bursitis – inflammation around joints
- Menstrual cramps (period pains)

Some NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and naproxen can be used to reduce fever. NSAIDs may also be used to treat other conditions on the advice of a doctor.

## What are the risks?

NSAIDs can cause side effects especially if used for a long period of time or in large doses. These include feeling or being sick, stomach irritation, stomach pain, bleeding from the stomach, bowels or back passage, rashes and respiratory problems. If they are used for a long time, they can cause kidney problems.

Some of the side effects are painful or uncomfortable. Others can be more serious and may need medical treatment.

Please tell your GP or healthcare professional if you:

- have had any reactions or side effects from NSAIDs before
- are allergic to any other substance such as food, preservatives or dyes
- are on any special diet such as low sodium or low sugar as some of these medicines contain sugar and sodium

Certain side effects, such as confusion, swelling of the face, feet or lower legs, or a sudden decrease in the amount of urine produced, may be especially likely to occur in more elderly people. Elderly people are usually more sensitive than younger adults to the effects of NSAIDs.

Elderly people are more likely than younger adults to get very sick if these medicines cause stomach problems. An NSAID called phenylbutazone can cause blood problems and these are more likely to occur in elderly people.

### **Pregnancy:**

Do not use NSAIDs if you are, or think you might be, pregnant.

### **Children:**

Ibuprofen has been tested in children six months of age and older. It has not been shown to cause different side effects or problems than it does in adults. It is important that you discuss the risks and benefits of using this medicine with your child's doctor before using it.

## **How do I take NSAIDs?**

Please take your painkiller as directed by your pain consultant or GP. There will also be information on the leaflet enclosed with the medication. Never share your medication with anyone else.

## **What if I have problems?**

You can contact the clinical nurse specialists in the pain management team (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) by:

- Calling **01384 244735** and leaving a message on the answerphone or
- Ringing the switchboard number 01384 456111 and asking them to bleep the number 5064

Out of these hours, you will need to contact your GP or NHS 111.

## **Can I find out more?**

The following website has more information about managing pain:

### **British Pain Society**

<https://www.britishpainsociety.org/british-pain-society-publications/patient-publications/>

The following website has information about medications and driving:

[www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law](http://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/pain-management/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet,  
please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي وبلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔