

When taking prescribed pain medications or over-the-counter pain medications always ask what other medicines can or can not be taken with the new medication. Also ask about foods and drinks, especially alcohol.

FOR THE PAIN: the following is a briefing on pain pills. ALWAYS BE SURE TO READ THE LABELS AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS ON USAGE!

A survey showed that 44% of Americans admit to taking more than the recommended dosage. If you take too much, you risk serious side effects. And be careful what you mix with the medication when you take it. Sometimes that combination can cause the serious side effect. About 16,500 people a year die from pain relievers:

TYLENOL (acetaminophen) all the pain killing power of aspirin, without the potential stomach problems, but not an anti-inflammatory.

ASPIRIN (acetylsalicylic acid) good for headaches, muscle pain and fever but can cause stomach irritations and nausea.

EXCEDRIN (blend of aspirin, acetaminophen and caffeine) which can speed pain relief but may keep you awake.

ADVIL (ibuprofen) which is the best anti-inflammatory and a good choice for soreness and swelling, says Donald Penzien, Ph.D., director of the head-pain center at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. But it can cause stomach problems. (Men's Health)

THE DAY AFTER a strenuous bout of exercise, ibuprofen or aspirin (but not acetaminophen) can provide relief. Resting a sore muscle can ease the discomfort, but "active rest" may be better: repeat the activity that caused the soreness, but at a low intensity (for instance, walk, don't run).

DID YOU KNOW that you shouldn't store medications and supplements in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink, over the stove or on a sunny windowsill, where steam, heat or sunlight could affect the potency of both vitamins and meds. And if you are carrying the container around with you be sure you are careful where you put it as you travel.