

How to alternate Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen

The best way to alternate taking Acetaminophen (example Tylenol) and Ibuprofen (example Advil/Motrin) is to take them 3 hours apart. For example, if you take ibuprofen at 6 am you can then take Tylenol at 9 am. You can continue this regimen throughout the day, making sure you do not exceed the recommended maximum dose for each drug.

The usual over the counter dose of ibuprofen is 200 mg per pill. Acetaminophen comes as 325 mg, 500 mg and 650 mg extended-release pills. Ibuprofen should always be taken with food as it can upset the stomach.

An alternating dosing schedule of 3 hours for an adult may look like this:

- 6 am Ibuprofen 200 mg 2 tablets with food
- 9 am Acetaminophen 500 mg 2 tablets
- 12 pm Ibuprofen 200 mg 2 tablets with food
- 3 pm Acetaminophen 500 mg 2 tablets
- 6 pm Ibuprofen 200 mg 2 tablets with food
- 9 pm Acetaminophen 500 mg 2 tablets

This dosing schedule does not exceed the recommended maximum dose of acetaminophen and ibuprofen. For Acetaminophen, you should not take more than 4000 mg in 24 hours unless otherwise instructed by your provider. For Ibuprofen, you should not take more than 3200 mg in 24 hours unless otherwise instructed by your provider.

Be sure to check your combination cold medicines for the above ingredients.

If you experience any concerning symptoms or do not experience relief of symptoms with this method in 48 hours, please call the advice nurse at (860)486-4700.