

MEDIA RELEASE

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Analgesics for children: benefits and harms

While paracetamol and ibuprofen are equally effective analgesics for children, paracetamol is generally still first line therapy because it may have fewer adverse effects. So says Dr Sean Beggs, General Paediatrician and Paediatric Clinical Pharmacologist from Royal Hobart Hospital, in the current issue of ***Australian Prescriber***.

Paracetamol, now the most widely used over-the-counter medication for children, is a safe medication to use if administered according to the recommended dosage.

However, there have been reports of liver toxicity when using paracetamol at therapeutic doses. "These have tended to be overweight children who had prolonged courses, and were being dosed according to their actual weight, rather than their lean body weight," the article states.

He writes that children who are more than 20% above their ideal body weight should be dosed according to their lean body weight.

"Codeine has a relatively unpredictable efficacy in children and is thus not routinely recommended," the article states.

When determining treatment, it is important to take into account the type of pain and whether the medication is being given in combination with other drugs.

For the complete article visit the *Australian Prescriber* website www.australianprescriber.com.

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For further advice health professionals can also call the Therapeutic Advice and Information Service (TAIS) – a medicines information service staffed by specialist drug information pharmacists – on 1300 138 677 Monday to Friday 9am-7pm Eastern Standard Time for the cost of a local call (mobiles may cost more).

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