

# NSAID's

## Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

### What are NSAID's?

**Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs**, or NSAID's, are common medicines used to treat the symptoms of arthritis.

They have analgesic (pain-reducing) and anti-inflammatory effects.

Because they have analgesic properties it means they can relieve pain similar to that of Paracetamol.

NSAID's are also effective in controlling

inflammation and by doing so they reduce the amount of stiffness and pain in the joint, muscle or tendon without using steroids.



### Types of NSAID's

There are many different types of NSAID's. For example Naproxen (Naprosyn), Ibuprofen (Brufen or Nurofen), Diclofenac (Voltaren) etc.

Although these preparations are similar, one maybe more suitable for one child than another.

### How do I use NSAID's

NSAID's are usually taken as tablets or capsules, some are available as a liquid suspension. Some NSAID's are taken only once a day (especially those in a 'slow-release', 'sustained-release' or 'retard' preparation), while others are taken 2-3 times a day.

Your doctor will advise you on the correct dose and discuss a suitable preparation.

### How do NSAID's work?

NSAID's stop the cells making prostaglandins. Prostaglandins are chemicals released by cells, causing inflammation. They also sensitise nerve endings, which can lead to pain.

By stopping cells making prostaglandins, NSAID's relieve symptoms of arthritis.

NSAID's do not stop the inflammation occurring in the future or prevent the disease progressing.

### How long does it take for NSAID's to work?

NSAID's provide relief from pain and stiffness. They work quickly, usually within an hour. The maximum anti-inflammatory from regular dosing can take up to 4 weeks, and sometimes longer.

## Are there any side effects?

As with all medications, NSAID's can have side effects.

- The most common side effects involve the digestive system such as abdominal pain , nausea (feeling sick), vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation, and/or heart burn. These problems can occur because the medication can irritate the protective lining of the stomach, the bowels and very rarely may cause ulcers (sore) to form on the lining. To prevent or reduce such side effects occurring take NSAID's with or just after food. Your doctor may also prescribe a medication to protect the stomach, to prevent such side effects occurring
- Less common or rare possible side effects include: skin rashes, mood changes, headaches and feelings of dizziness. NSAID's may cause asthma to worsen and wheezing may occur after starting the drug.
- Very rarely and usually only in older people NSAID's may affect the kidneys, or liver.

These side effects appear to be reversible if the drug is stopped, so they are very unlikely to result in permanent damage.

## What checks should my child have while on a NSAID?

1. Always take with or after food, a glass of milk is considered food (or something similar)
2. Look out for side effects and report them to your doctor.
3. Allow them time to work
4. NSAID's are safe even after long term use however your doctor may do blood and urine tests and check your blood pressure on a regular basis.

Please note that this information sheet does not list all the uses and side effects associated with this drug.

For full details please see the drug information leaflet which comes with your medicine.  
If you have any further questions or concerns please contact your Paediatric Rheumatology Team.