

This document was pulled from **Self-care Tips if you become sick with COVID-19 from an activist nurse: <http://bit.ly/33iG8yr>**. This version was last updated 3/19/2020. Visit the embedded link for updates.

An update from an NYC activist Nursing student and a Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Leader: **[March 18, 2020 - Regarding Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen:](#)**

Many people have become worried after a tweet from French Health Minister Olivier Véran suggesting that Ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatory drugs may worsen the Covid-19 infection. According to a report by NBC News on March 18, 2020, The World Health Organization told NBC News it's "gathering evidence" on the topic, but "after a rapid review of the literature, is not aware of published clinical or population-based data on this topic." While there is currently no strong evidence that anti-inflammatories worsen Covid-19 infections, there are conflicting recommendations from different health professionals. As a result, many people are being cautious and deciding to take Acetaminophen (also known as Paracetamol) instead.

Given this trend, people should be aware that **Acetaminophen is a common ingredient in over 600 prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines such as Tylenol, Mucinex, Sudafed and Vicodin. Taken correctly, the medications can be safe and effective but taking too much acetaminophen can lead to severe liver damage.**

I am including to some helpful guidelines from Harvard Medical School below:

For the average healthy adult, the generally recommended **maximum daily dose is no more than 4,000 milligrams (mg) from all sources**. But in some people, doses close to the 4,000 mg daily limit for adults could still be toxic to the liver. **It's safest to take only what you need, and to not exceed 3,000 mg a day whenever possible, especially if you use acetaminophen often.**

- **Cold and flu remedies count.** When you reach for an over-the-counter cough, cold, or flu product, take a look at the label. Does it contain acetaminophen?
- **Know the milligrams in your pills.** In acetaminophen products available over the counter, each pill may contain 325, 500, or 650 milligrams of the drug. Be extra cautious when taking 500 or 650 milligram pills.
- **Stick to recommended doses.** When taking acetaminophen, don't be tempted to add a little extra to the recommended dose. A small-bodied person should stay on the low end of the recommended dose range (3,000 mg).
- **Easy on the alcohol.** Drinking alcohol causes the liver to convert more of the acetaminophen you take into toxic byproducts. Men should not have more than two standard drinks per day when taking acetaminophen (one drink per day for

women).

- **Know if your medications interact.** Ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of your prescription medications could interact badly with acetaminophen.

If you decide to use Acetaminophen or Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like Ibuprofen, please be aware of the potential risks and use it safely. Below are some drug facts and helpful guidelines:

- [FDA on Using Acetaminophen and Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs Safely](#)
- [Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition](#)
- [Ibuprofen Drug facts label](#)
- [Acetaminophen Drug Facts](#)



Self-care Tips if you become sick with COVID-19 from an activist nurse:

So what I have seen a lot of is recommendations for how to try to avoid getting coronavirus in the first place -- good handwashing -- but what I have NOT seen a lot of is advice for what happens if you actually get it, which many of us will. So as your friendly neighborhood RN, let me make some suggestions.

You basically just want to prepare as though you know you're going to get a nasty respiratory bug, like bronchitis or pneumonia. You just have the foresight to know it's coming.

Things you should actually buy ahead of time (not sure what the obsession with toilet paper is?): Kleenex, Acetaminophen (Tylenol) in 325 mg tablets, Ibuprofen (Advil) in 200 mg tablets, Mucinex, Robitussin or whatever your generic cough medicine of choice is (check the label and make sure you're not doubling up on acetaminophen - some brands like DayQuil have it included and you don't want that). You want a cough medicine with both a cough suppressant and expectorant. Vix vaporub for your chest is also a great suggestion.

If you don't have a humidifier, that would be a good thing to buy and run in your room when you go to bed overnight. (You can also just turn the shower on hot and sit in the bathroom breathing in the steam). If you have a history of asthma and you have a prescription inhaler, make sure the one you have isn't expired and refill it/get a new one if it is.

This is also a good time to meal prep: make a big batch of your favorite soup to freeze and have on hand. Whatever your favorite clear fluids are to drink (Sprite, juice, ICE waters, Fresca, whatever floats your boat), stock your pantry with those. Maybe get some nice soothing tea too!

For symptom management, use the meds I mentioned. For a fever over 101, alternate Tylenol 650 mg and Advil 400 mg so you're taking a dose of one then the other every 3 hours.

Drink A TON, hydrate hydrate hydrate. Rest lots. You should not be leaving your house except to go to the doctor, and if you do, wear a mask (regular is fine, you don't need an N95).

You DO NOT NEED TO GO TO THE ER unless you are having trouble breathing or your fever is very high (over 103.5 F/39 C) and unmanaged with meds. 90% of healthy adult cases thus far have been managed at home with basic rest/hydration/over-the-counter meds. We don't want to clog the ERs unless you're actually in distress. The hospital beds will be used for people who actively need oxygen/breathing treatments/IV fluids.

If you have a pre-existing lung condition (COPD, emphysema, lung cancer) or are on immunosuppressants, now is a great time to talk to your PCP or specialist about what they would like you to do if you get sick. They might have plans to get you admitted and bypass the ER entirely.

One major relief to you parents is that kids do VERY well with coronavirus— they usually bounce back in a few days, NO ONE under 18 has died, and almost no kids have required hospitalization (unless they have a lung disease like CF). Just use pediatric dosing of the same meds.

Just be calm and prepare rationally and everything will be just ducky.

