

Simple Analgesia (Painkillers)

There are several different types of painkillers readily available to buy over-the-counter that can help you manage and improve your symptoms.

It is recognised that exercise and strengthening exercises can help in managing pain and the use of pain killers can help you gain more benefit from doing the exercises.

Paracetamol

Paracetamol is a commonly used medicine that is effective in treating pain. It is best taken regularly to manage pain rather than taking on an as and when basis. Adult dosage is 2x500mg tablets four times a day and this dosage is not to be exceeded. Paracetamol is normally well tolerated with few side effects and can be taken safely long term. This is recommended by NICE as first line treatment for Osteoarthritis.

Anti-inflammatory pain relief

Anti-inflammatory medication is another type of medication effective in improving pain levels. These are available in various brands such as ibuprofen in both tablet and cream versions and can be used safely in combination with other pain killers. These are also recommended by NICE alongside regular paracetamol as first line treatment for Osteoarthritis. Doses that should not be exceeded vary between anti-inflammatory medications and this should be discussed with a pharmacist/ GP.

Unfortunately there are some recognised side effects of anti-inflammatory medications including gastric upset/indigestion and they can affect your kidneys. If you are known to already have such issues or take blood thinners you should discuss with a pharmacist / GP whether these medications are suitable for you.

Co-Codamol

Co-codamol is a stronger medication containing a combination of Paracetamol and varying strengths of Codeine. As this contains paracetamol, this is not to be taken as well as Paracetamol tablets but can also be taken four times a day. This is a stronger painkiller but does have some side effects such a constipation or drowsiness. Different doses of co-codamol exist so the dose to use should be discussed with a pharmacist/ GP

Prescribed medication

Sometimes over-the-counter medication proves not to be strong enough or effective in managing symptoms of pain. If this is the case consider whether you have optimized the dosage of over-the-counter medication available and if you have then consider discussing your symptoms further with a pharmacist or GP.