



University Hospitals Bristol  
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information service  
Bristol Royal Hospital for Children

# Giving paracetamol and ibuprofen to your child



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Bristol Royal Hospital  
For Children

## Paracetamol (Calpol)

### When should I give paracetamol?

If your child has mild to moderate pain or has a fever (over 38°C) which causes them to become distressed, you can give them a dose of paracetamol. Then **wait at least four hours** before giving another dose.

If your child needs paracetamol for several days, give a dose of paracetamol every six hours. This will help to manage the pain safely for a few days without the risk of giving too much.

### Give no more than four doses of paracetamol in 24 hours.

If you think you may have given an extra dose of paracetamol by mistake, wait at least eight hours before giving any more. If you are concerned your child may have had more than one extra dose, contact your doctor, NHS 111 or take your child to hospital straight away.

Last dose of paracetamol given at: \_\_\_\_\_ next dose due at: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ibuprofen (Nurofen, Calprofen)

### When should I give ibuprofen?

Ibuprofen can also be used if your child has a fever which causes them to be distressed, or is in mild to moderate pain.

You can give a **maximum of three doses of ibuprofen in 24 hours** which should be **at least six hours apart**, for example, 8.00am, 2.00pm and 8.00pm.

If you think you may have given your child an extra dose of ibuprofen by mistake, wait at least 12 hours before giving another dose. If you are concerned your child may have had more than one extra dose, contact your doctor, NHS 111 or take your child to hospital straight away.

Last dose of ibuprofen given at: \_\_\_\_\_ next dose due at: \_\_\_\_\_

## How much should I give?

If you have been given a prescription, your doctor will work out the amount (the dose) for your child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

If you have bought your medicine over the counter, then please follow the instructions on the bottle carefully. If you are not sure how much to give, then contact your pharmacist or doctor.

Write down the time that you give each dose to help you remember.

## When should the medicine start working?

The medicine may take about 30 minutes to one hour to start working.

## What if my child vomits?

If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of paracetamol, give them the same dose again.

If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after taking a dose, you do not need to give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

## Can paracetamol and ibuprofen be given together?

Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be given together but it is often better to stagger them so that every few hours, if needed, the child can have some medication. For example:

- 8.00am: paracetamol dose given
- 11.00am: child remains distressed, ibuprofen dose given
- 2.00pm: child remains distressed, paracetamol dose given

**It is very important to make sure that your child does not have more than four doses of paracetamol and three doses of ibuprofen in 24 hours.**

Please note that if for any reason you would value a second opinion concerning your diagnosis or treatment, you are entirely within your rights to request this.

The first step would usually be to discuss this with the doctor or other lead clinician who is responsible for your care.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact **Smokefree Bristol** on **0117 922 2255**.

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While your child is under our care, you may be approached about them taking part in research. To find out more please visit: **[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation)** or call the research and innovation team on **0117 342 0233**.

For access to other patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:

**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/)**

**Hospital switchboard: 0117 923 0000**



**Minicom: 0117 934 9869**



**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk)**



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print, audio or PDF format, please email [patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk](mailto:patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk).

