

Pain (long-term and flare-up): medication options

Use this **Option Grid™** decision aid to help you and your healthcare professional decide which tablets you may like to take for long-term and flare-up pain of the muscles, ligaments, or soft tissue. This medication information applies to the United Kingdom only.

Frequently Asked Questions ↓	Paracetamol	Co-codamol	Tramadol	Ibuprofen or Naproxen (Can be taken with the other 3 options)
When are they used?	For most types of pain.	For most types of pain.	For most types of pain.	For pain with swelling and inflammation.
How do they work?	Partially block pain pathways; reduce high temperature and inflammation.	Partially block pain pathways.	Partially block pain pathways.	Reduce inflammation.
How effective are they?	25 in every 100 people (25%) have a reduction in pain by half or more.	50 in every 100 people (50%) have a reduction in pain by half or more.	20 in every 100 people (20%) have a reduction in pain by half or more.	30 in every 100 people (30%) have a reduction in pain by half or more.
What are the most common side effects?	Some people experience skin reactions and tiredness.	Some people experience nausea, constipation and tiredness.	Some people experience nausea, constipation and tiredness.	Some people experience indigestion and stomach discomfort.
What tablets should I start with?	Most people start with these as a first option.	Most people use these as the second option instead of paracetamol.	Most people use these only if the first two options are not tolerated or effective.	Use one of these as well as one of the others if required.
Is it safe for me to take?	Usually safe unless you have liver problems.	Can cause addiction. It is not safe to take co-codamol if you are also taking paracetamol.	Can cause addiction. Consult your GP if you have uncontrolled epilepsy or if you are taking antidepressants.	Caution for those with stomach ulcers: other tablets to protect your stomach will be prescribed if you take these regularly. Not suitable if you have kidney or heart problems.
What dose of tablet should I take?	Two 500 mg tablets up to four times a day. Max: eight tablets in 24 hours	Firstly, take two 8/500 mg tablets up to four times a day (no more than eight tablets in 24 hours). OR Take two 30/500 mg tablets up to four times a day if the lower strength is not effective (no more than eight tablets in 24 hours).	One or two 50 mg tablets up to four times a day (no more than eight tablets in 24 hours). Take with paracetamol.	Ibuprofen: 300-400 mg three times a day. Max: No more than 1200 mg in 24 hours. Naproxen: 250 mg or 500 mg every 6-8 hours as required. Max: No more than 1250 mg in 24 hours.
What if I have side effects I cannot tolerate?	Stop taking them.	Reduce by 1-2 tablets a day until side effects stop.	Reduce by 1-2 tablets a day until side effects stop.	Stop taking them.

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