

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Benefits and Risks: How To Choose A Pain Reliever

(NAPSA)—Like many, you may need to take medicine to treat or manage a condition or disease. But it can be hard to decide which drug to take. Are the possible benefits greater than the potential risks?

Keep in mind: All medicines have potential risks and benefits. This is true of over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drugs. So how can you choose what's right for you when managing pain, such as arthritis or joint pain?

Many pain relievers can help treat arthritis pain. These drugs may include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs. They are available OTC and by prescription. NSAIDs provide pain relief but there may be risks such as stomach problems and skin reactions. There may also be potential heart risks.

To choose what pain reliever is right for you, you should talk with your doctor. You may be asked questions on various health topics like:

- **Type of pain**—How long have you had arthritis? How much does it slow you down? How painful is it and when does the pain happen?
- **Health history**—What other health issues do you have now or have you had in the past? For example, do you have heart disease? Do you often get upset stomachs or have an ulcer?
- **Allergies**—Are you allergic to any medicines? What other allergies do you have?



Talk to your doctor to decide which pain medicine is right for you.

- **Other medications**—What other drugs do you take? Don't forget over-the-counter drugs. You may buy them at the drugstore or grocery store, but your doctor still needs to know.

By answering these types of questions, you and your doctor can have a better discussion about what medicine is most appropriate for you...and how your own health history and risk factors for disease can impact your treatment choice.

It's also important to realize that not treating pain can be risky, too. You may gain weight which could increase your risk for heart disease. Pain might also make you feel depressed.

Talk to your doctor to weigh any drug's risks and benefits. Then you and your doctor can make the best health choice for you.