

# Patients may receive too much acetaminophen in hospital

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Use of drugs such as Tylenol, Percocet can exceed recommended daily dose, study finds.

(HealthDay) -- Roughly 2.5 percent of admitted hospital patients may receive more than the safe daily cumulative dose of the pain-reliever acetaminophen, best known as Tylenol, on at least one day, according to a new U.S. study.

Patients on more than one drug containing acetaminophen often consume more than the recommended 4 grams per day of the drug, the researchers from Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia found.

Together, two tablets of extra-strength [Tylenol](#) contain 1 gram of acetaminophen, commonly used to relieve pain and reduce fever.

Over the course of two years, researchers led by Dr. Jesse Civan examined 46,000 [hospital admissions](#) and the medications those patients were given. They found that on at least one day of hospitalization, roughly 1,100 patients received more than 4 grams of acetaminophen in the form of Tylenol, Percocet and similar drugs.

The study authors also assessed the effects the acetaminophen had on the patients' livers and found only a small minority were given a blood test to check their liver function. The investigators noted that this test is typically used only when a doctor has a specific concern about possible problems with a patient's liver.

In the small number of patients who did have the [blood test](#) of [liver function](#), the researchers noted that there were no serious liver injuries. They said there wasn't enough information to determine if abnormal test results were the result of excessive exposure to acetaminophen.

Civan and colleagues concluded that more research is needed to determine if new recommendations for the safe daily dosing of acetaminophen are necessary. They added that patients need better education on acetaminophen safety, particularly for use of the drug after they leave the hospital, when patients may try to duplicate the medications and doses they were given during their admission.

The study was presented Monday at the [Digestive Disease Week](#) meeting in San Diego. The data and conclusions should be viewed as preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

**More information:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has more about [acetaminophen](#).

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