

## Sweden bans supermarket paracetamol sales after overdose hike

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Various pills. Credit: Wikipedia

Sweden said Wednesday that it will ban the sale of paracetamol tablets in supermarkets due to a sharp rise in overdoses in the six years since they became available outside of pharmacies.

"Non-prescription paracetamol tablets can no longer be sold outside of pharmacies after November 1, 2015," the Swedish Medical Products Agency said in a statement.

"Paracetamol in its ordinary tablet form is responsible for most cases of poisoning which is why we are limiting its availability."

No restrictions will be placed on paracetamol in liquid or suppository

form.

The agency pointed to a study which showed a 40 percent increase in paracetamol-related poisoning, which can lead to fatal liver damage, between 2009—when the tablets went on general sale—and 2013.

Supermarkets and [petrol stations](#) selling non-prescription medicines are generally open later than pharmacies in Sweden, making paracetamol tablets more readily available, posing a potential danger to public health, according to the medical agency.

The British pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline, which manufactures Sweden's most popular paracetamol-based painkillers Alvedon and Panodil, questioned the evidence behind the decision.

"From the data presented we cannot draw the conclusion that supermarket sales are behind the increase," a spokeswoman for the company told Swedish news agency TT, pointing to a similar rise in overdoses between 2000 and 2005 before the drugs went on general sale.

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