

# Acetaminophen given early doesn't cut ICU days

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(HealthDay)—For intensive care unit (ICU) patients with fever due to probable infection, early administration of acetaminophen does not affect the number of ICU-free days, according to a study published online Oct. 5 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The research was published to coincide with the annual meeting of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine, held from Oct. 3 to 7 in Berlin.

Paul Young, M.D., from Wellington Regional Hospital in New Zealand, and colleagues randomized 700 critically ill patients with fever and known or suspected infection to receive intravenous acetaminophen (1 g) or placebo every six hours. Treatment was received until ICU discharge, fever resolution, cessation of microbial therapy, or death.

The researchers observed no significant difference in the number of ICU-free days to day 28 between the groups (23 days in the acetaminophen

group versus 22 days in the placebo group; Hodges-Lehmann estimate of absolute difference, 0 days;  $P = 0.07$ ). By day 90, 15.9 percent of patients in the acetaminophen group and 16.6 percent in the placebo group had died (relative risk, 0.96; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.66 to 1.39;  $P = 0.84$ ).

"Early administration of acetaminophen to treat fever due to probable infection did not affect the number of ICU-free days," the authors write.

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