

What medications are safe for cases of COVID-19?

March 27 2020, by Mallory Olson



Frank Romanelli, College of Pharmacy, explains best practices for determining what medications are safe to treat symptoms of COVID-19. Credit: University of Kentucky

There is plenty of information floating around the Internet about what medications may or may not be useful to treat symptoms of COVID-19.

In this ever-evolving situation, it's important to stay updated with information from reliable sources.

"This is an unprecedented time for the world. The extent of the pandemic, coupled with our digital capabilities, is leading to a tremendous quantity of information reaching both individuals and [healthcare workers](#) regarding COVID-19," said Frank Romanelli, a professor and associate dean at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy.

It was recently reported that the use of ibuprofen could worsen the severity of COVID-19 for individuals diagnosed with the disease. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) released the following statement:

"At present, based on currently available information, WHO does not recommend against the use of ibuprofen. We are also consulting with physicians treating COVID-19 patients and are not aware of reports of any negative effects of ibuprofen, beyond the usual known side effects that limit its use in certain populations. WHO is not aware of published clinical or population-based data on this topic."

Romanelli said the reports concerning ibuprofen originated in France.

"There is no direct data to support the original negative claims that were circulated, but because of these reports, different outlets are now prospectively collecting data so that, in time, more evidence-based recommendations can be made," Romanelli said.

Reports recommending against the use of NSAIDs, like [ibuprofen](#), advised the use of Acetaminophen (Tylenol).

"There is no reason not to use acetaminophen for COVID-19,"

Romanelli said. "In fact, some clinicians might even recommend it first, since it is such an effective drug at reducing fever while causing less gastrointestinal (GI) irritation. The only concerns with acetaminophen are around people with pre-existing liver disease."

There have also been various reports regarding some older antimalarial drugs that may be effective against COVID-19, such as chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine. Others believe people on a very common class of anti-hypertensive medications, known as ACE-inhibitors, might be at increased risk of COVID-19 infection and progression.

Until researchers and [healthcare providers](#) have access to more reliable and controlled data, it's in your best interest to seek your physician or pharmacist's advice regarding what medications should or should not be used to treat symptoms of COVID-19.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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