

OVER-THE-COUNTER (NON-PRESCRIPTION) MEDICATIONS AND YOUR KIDNEYS

If you have chronic kidney disease, please check with your doctor or pharmacist **BEFORE** taking any medications, including the ones in this handout. Never take more than the recommended dose of any medication. Read the label carefully before buying over-the-counter (non-prescription) medications and follow the instructions.

WHY?

The kidneys work to get rid of many medications. **If your kidneys are not working well, medications might build up in your body and cause unwanted side effects.**

Here is a list of commonly used medications that are OK to take or NOT OK to take if you have kidney disease. This is not a complete list. When in doubt, consult your doctor, pharmacist or Kidney Care Clinic (bring this list with you).

OVER-THE-COUNTER (NON-PRESCRIPTION) MEDICATIONS			
Type	OK to Take	Don't Take	Don't Take Because...
Antacids (adults only; if <19 yrs old, check with pharmacist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or two TUMS (calcium carbonate), ranitidine (ZANTAC 75) or famotidine (PEPCID AC) can be taken sometimes. If you need something regularly, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antacids that contain aluminum, magnesium (MAALOX, MYLANTA, GAVISCON) or sodium (ALKA-SELTZER). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your kidneys may not be able to get rid of the extra aluminum, magnesium and sodium. A build-up may cause unwanted effects. Extra sodium can increase your blood pressure.
Anti-diarrhea medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loperamide (IMODIUM), kaolin-pectin (KAOPECTATE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bismuth subsalicylate (PEPTO-BISMOL). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This product contains salicylic acid that may harm your kidneys.
Antihistamines (for hay fever or runny nose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chlorpheniramine (CHLOR-TRIPOLON) or diphenhydramine (BENADRYL) are safe to use but may make you feel drowsy. Half the usual dose of loratadine (CLARITIN), desloratadine (AERIUS) or cetirizine (REACTINE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full dose of the types of antihistamines that do not make you feel drowsy, e.g. loratadine (CLARITIN), desloratadine (AERIUS) and cetirizine (REACTINE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your kidneys may not be able to get rid of certain antihistamines. A build-up may cause unwanted side effects.

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Type	OK to Take	Don't Take	Don't Take Because...
Cold / flu medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topical nasal sprays such as xylometazoline (OTRIVIN) for less than 5 days may be okay. Check with your doctor or pharmacist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral decongestants such as pseudoephedrine (SUDAFED) or phenylephrine which are found in many cough and cold products. Products with multiple ingredients (e.g., DIMETAPP, NEOCITRAN, CONTAC-C). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral decongestants can increase blood pressure and cause your heart and kidneys to work too hard. Products with multiple ingredients usually contain an oral decongestant—check the label.
Cough medications (not safe for children under 6 yrs old)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any sugar-free cough syrup in people with diabetes. For productive cough, use guaifenisin (ROBITUSSIN syrup). For dry cough, use dextromethorphan or DM (BENYLIN DM or ROBITUSSIN DM syrup). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cough syrups that contain sugar if you have diabetes. Products with multiple ingredients (e.g. ROBITUSSIN COUGH & COLD, BENYLIN COUGH & COLD, BENYLIN COUGH & CHEST CONGESTION syrup). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cough syrup containing sugar may affect the sugar control in people with diabetes. Products with multiple ingredients usually contain an oral decongestant—check the label.
Contrast dyes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are going for a special x-ray such as CT scan or angiogram, call your doctor or nurse at the Kidney Care Clinic. They will suggest ways to help protect your kidneys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some contrast dyes can damage the kidneys.
Fever/pain medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acetaminophen (TYLENOL). Acetylsalicylic acid 75 to 81 mg (baby ASPIRIN) if over 19 years old and recommended by your doctor to prevent heart attack or stroke. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (ADVIL, MOTRIN), naproxen (ALEVE) or acetylsalicylic acid (ASPIRIN or ENTROPHEN) in doses over 325 mg per day. Acetylsalicylic acid (ASPIRIN) if under 19 years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-inflammatories can increase blood pressure and harm your kidneys.
Herbal / alternative medications		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVOID all alternative or herbal medications until you have checked with your pharmacist or doctor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These products may harm your kidneys or may interact with other medications.

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Type	OK to Take	Don't Take	Don't Take Because...
Laxatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Docusate (COLACE) — a stool softener to decrease straining. • Lactulose syrup. • Polyethylene glycol 3350 powder (LAX-A-DAY or RESTORALAX). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laxatives that have magnesium or phosphate (MILK OF MAGNESIA, FLEET ENEMA or ORAL FLEET). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your kidneys may not be able to get rid of the extra magnesium or phosphate. • Laxatives can cause diarrhea and dehydration which can hurt your kidneys.
Nausea & vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimenhydrinate (GRAVOL). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have a bad flu or illness which causes you to vomit or have diarrhea AND you are not able to eat or drink normally, contact your doctor or nurse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are sick and not able to eat and drink normally, you may become dehydrated. Dehydration affects your kidney function and blood pressure.
Sore throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HALLS or BRADOSOL if you do not have diabetes. • RICOLA SUGAR FREE or BENTASIL SUGAR-FREE if you have diabetes. • Acetaminophen (TYLENOL). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid taking throat lozenges that contain sugar if you have diabetes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking too many regular throat lozenges may affect sugar control in people with diabetes.
Vitamins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about what vitamins might be best for you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitamin A. • High dose vitamin C. • High dose vitamin B. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most multivitamins can be harmful if your kidneys are not working very well.



If you smoke and would like to quit or learn more about nicotine replacement therapy, please visit:

BC Ministry of Health: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/stop-smoking/>

Quit Now: www.quitnow.ca

This brochure is based on a similar pamphlet developed by the KCC team at St. Paul's Hospital, with appreciation. It can be downloaded from the BC Renal Agency website: bcrenalagency.ca.