



Common Over-the-Counter Medications and Their Potential Drug Interactions

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Over-The-Counter (OTC) medications are medications that can be purchased without a prescription from a healthcare provider. They are widely available and are used to treat a variety of common health conditions such as headaches, allergies, and digestive issues. While these medications can be effective for managing symptoms, they also carry the risk of drug interactions when taken with other medications.

Some common over-the-counter medications

Pain relievers such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and aspirin are commonly used to treat headaches, muscle pain, and other types of pain. While these medications are generally safe when taken as directed, they can interact with other medications, especially blood thinners such as warfarin or aspirin. Combining pain relievers with alcohol or other drugs that affect the liver can also increase the risk of liver damage.

Antihistamines: Antihistamines are used to treat allergies and other respiratory symptoms such as sneezing and runny nose. Some common antihistamines include diphenhydramine, loratadine, and cetirizine. Antihistamines can interact with other medications that cause drowsiness, such as benzodiazepines or opioids. They can also interact with some antidepressants and blood pressure medications.

Decongestants: Decongestants such as pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine are used to treat nasal congestion and sinus pressure. They can interact with other medications that increase blood pressure, such as certain antidepressants and blood pressure medications. They can also interact with medications that affect the heart rate, such as beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers.

Antacids: Antacids such as calcium carbonate and aluminum hydroxide are used to treat heartburn and indigestion. They can interact with medications that affect the absorption of other

medications, such as antibiotics and thyroid medications. They can also interact with medications that contain magnesium, such as laxatives and some pain relievers.

Cough and cold remedies: Cough and cold remedies often contain a combination of medications such as pain relievers, antihistamines, and decongestants. These medications can interact with each other and with other medications, including blood pressure medications, antidepressants, and anticoagulants. They can also interact with alcohol, which can increase the risk of drowsiness and other side effects.

To reduce the risk of drug interactions when taking over-the-counter medications, it is important to follow these guidelines:

Read the label: Always read the label carefully before taking an over-the-counter medication. Look for warnings about potential drug interactions and follow the instructions for use.

Talk to your healthcare provider: If you are taking prescription medications or have a medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking an over-the-counter medication. They can help you identify potential drug interactions and recommend alternative treatments if necessary.

Keep a list of medications: Keep a list of all medications you are taking, including prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and supplements. Share this list with your healthcare provider to help them identify potential drug interactions.

Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs: Alcohol and recreational drugs can interact with over-the-counter medications, increasing the risk of side effects and complications. Avoid using these substances while taking over-the-counter medications.

Use caution with supplements: Many supplements can interact with over-the-counter medications, especially those that contain St. John's wort, which can interact with a variety of medications including antidepressants and blood thinners. Talk to your healthcare provider before taking any new supplements.

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