

Acetaminophen Safe for Use in Children with Asthma

Research finds no additional asthma attacks with acetaminophen use over ibuprofen

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DENVER, CO — Children with asthma who take acetaminophen for fever and pain relief suffer no more exacerbations than those taking ibuprofen, according to research at National Jewish Health and other institutions in the AsthmaNet national research network. The study was funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and is being published in the August 18, 2016, *New England Journal of Medicine*.



“Previous research has raised concerns about the link between asthma and acetaminophen,” said Ronina Covar, MD, co-author on the study and Director of the Severe Asthma Clinic at National Jewish Health *for Kids*. “This study shows that parents of children with asthma can safely use either acetaminophen or ibuprofen to treat their children’s routine pain and fever.”

The research team, which also included National Jewish Health physicians Michael Wechsler, MD, and Tod Olin, MD,

followed 300 children ages 1 to 5 with mild persistent asthma for 48 weeks. Half took acetaminophen and half took ibuprofen as needed for pain and/or fever. Over that time children received a median of 5.5 doses of either ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

The number of asthma exacerbations requiring systemic glucocorticoids was similar for children taking acetaminophen and ibuprofen -- 0.81 per child taking acetaminophen and 0.87 per child taking ibuprofen, a difference considered statistically insignificant. There also were no significant differences in percentage of asthma-control days, use of an albuterol rescue inhaler, unscheduled health care utilization for asthma or adverse events for children taking the different medications.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 120 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the media resources page.

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