

## Understanding

# Codeine containing analgesics

## COMMON BRAND NAMES

Paracetamol (Panadeine, Panadeine Forte, Mersyndol), ibuprofen (Nurofen Plus) or aspirin (Aspalgin, Disprin Forte).



## What is codeine?

Codeine is part of the family known as opioid analgesics. It is commonly found in pain relieving medicines with paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin. Codeine is converted to morphine in the body.

## Taking these medicines safely

If you have been prescribed one of these medicines:

- Only take the dose prescribed for you
- Don't share your medicine with anyone
- Check with your GP or pharmacist before using other medicines
- Don't take more than the recommended maximum dose of 6-8 tablets a day
- Let your pharmacist or GP know if you experience side effects such as memory loss, confusion, breathing problems, daytime sedation, anxiety and mood changes or constipation
- High doses of codeine with paracetamol can lead to liver damage
- Talk to your GP, pharmacist or other health professional if you find the codeine medicine no longer helps to control your symptoms
- High doses of codeine with ibuprofen can lead to stomach ulcers, anaemia or kidney problems.

## How would I know if I am having problems with this medicine?

Possible signs of dependence:

- Taking the medicine in larger amounts or for longer than you're meant to

- Not being able to cut down or stop using the medicine
- Having cravings and urges to use the medicine
- Not managing to do what you should at work, home, or school because of your use of the medicine
- Its use causes problems in relationships
- Repeatedly using the medicine, even when it puts you in danger
- Needing more of the medicine to get the effect you want (eg. developing a tolerance)
- Having withdrawal symptoms that can be relieved by taking more of the medicine



## Where can I find more information or help?

Talk to your GP, pharmacist or other health care professional if you are concerned about the medicines you take. Other services that can assist:

**Pharmaceutical Helpline**  
Tel: 1800 737 233

**SafeScript**  
[www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript)

**Directline**  
Tel: 1800 888 236

