

When Prescribing NSAIDs...



USE THE  
LOWEST  
EFFECTIVE  
DOSE



FOR THE  
SHORTEST  
PERIOD OF  
TIME

# THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATING PATIENTS ABOUT NSAIDs

Members of the Alliance include:



Alliance for Rational  
Use of NSAIDs  
A Public Health Coalition

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are one of the most commonly used medications in the United States. In 2012, approximately 98 million prescriptions for NSAIDs were filled,<sup>1</sup> and billions of tablets of over-the-counter (OTC) NSAIDs were sold.

The incidence of NSAID adverse events (AEs), including gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, and renal toxicity, increases significantly with concurrent use of multiple NSAID products and increased dose and duration of use.<sup>2-6</sup>

Many patients are not familiar with the term NSAID and do not know which products are NSAIDs. Many patients are also unaware that some cold and pain medications contain NSAIDs combined with antihistamines, decongestants, or other analgesics. A lack of patient awareness about what NSAIDs are, combined with the availability of OTC NSAID products, complicates their appropriate use. In a US survey, 38% of respondents reported knowingly using prescription and OTC NSAIDs at the same time,<sup>7</sup> with many more likely doing so unknowingly.

To maximize their effectiveness while minimizing the likelihood of severe and potentially severe AEs, NSAIDs must be used appropriately—one NSAID product at a time at the lowest effective dose for the shortest period of time to achieve therapeutic effect.<sup>8-13</sup>

To help balance the risk of AEs and ensure appropriate NSAID use, OTC product use should be a standard part of each medication review, and, when any NSAID product is prescribed, patients should be educated about which prescription and nonprescription medications are NSAIDs. Patient education should also include where to look for NSAID information on OTC medication packaging, to consult a health care professional before taking an OTC NSAID if they are taking medications for pain or inflammatory conditions, and to take NSAIDs exactly as prescribed or indicated on the label.

The Alliance for Rational Use of NSAIDs—a public health coalition—aims to bridge the gap between guidance and clinical practice, educating health care professionals and the public at-large to ensure appropriate and safe use of NSAIDs.

To download educational materials and learn more about the Alliance for Rational Use of NSAIDs, visit [www.NSAIDAlliance.com](http://www.NSAIDAlliance.com).

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