

- Be aware that some of the tablets your doctor gives you can also be bought over the counter. Be careful not to take double the dose.
- Remember to tell the pharmacist if you are diabetic or have had an allergic reaction to any medicine.
- Try to use the same pharmacy so that the pharmacist can build up a complete picture of all the drugs you are taking. He/she will then be able to provide you with the best advice.
- If you find that you need to treat the same symptoms frequently, please do not forget to mention them to your doctor at your next visit.
- When the renal team ask which medications you take, include those you buy yourself.
- Be careful not to take more than one preparation with Paracetamol in - do not forget that Co-codamol and Co-proxamol (Distalgesic) contain Paracetamol.
- Effervescent tablets are best avoided because they contain sodium.
- If you have a transplant try not to take any indigestion remedies for one hour before or after your transplant medicines.
- You should remember that, although some medicines are not recommended for you to buy, they may be safe for your doctor to prescribe them.

The National Kidney Federation cannot accept responsibility for information provided. The above is for guidance only. Patients are advised to seek further information from their own doctor.

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Medications Series

OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS



The NKF – the largest Kidney Patient Charity in the UK

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Ailment	What to avoid	Suitable alternatives	Additional comments
Headache	Ibuprofen, Aspirin and all effervescent products	Paracetamol	See your doctor if symptoms don't improve
Colds and Coughs	Any medication containing a decongestant especially if you take tablets for high blood pressure. Aspirin and Ibuprofen	Paracetamol for aches and pains. Try simple linctus to soothe coughs and sore throats - ask for sugar free products if you are diabetic	Try a menthol or steam inhalation to clear any congestion.
Muscle aches	Tablets or creams containing Ibuprofen or similar medicines	Deep Heat or Ralgex	
Indigestion	Some people should avoid any preparations containing Aluminium, Sodium, Potassium or Magnesium.	Preparations containing calcium (unless you have been told your calcium is high).	See your doctor if you have indigestion regularly.
Constipation	Fybogel - if you have a restricted fluid intake.	Senna	See your doctor if no better in a week
Diarrhoea	Rehydration salts unless recommended by your doctor	Loperamide	If severe contact your doctor
Vitamins	Vitamin A	Not necessary unless prescribed by your doctor	Check the label of multivitamins as this can build up in kidney disease.

As a patient with a renal condition there are sometimes problems with buying medicines over the counter to treat minor ailments i.e. from pharmacies, supermarkets or garages. This is relevant whether you have poor renal function, are on dialysis or have a transplant.

The word medicine includes tablets, capsules, liquids, inhalers, or creams that either your doctor gives you or that you buy.

Aspirin and Ibuprofen belong to a group of medicines called *Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs* (NSAIDs). Diclofenac is another NSAID available from your doctor. NSAID's can be very harmful to kidneys, so if you have a transplant or have poor renal function not requiring dialysis all NSAIDs should be avoided. Take care not to take one NSAID given to you by your doctor and another one that you have bought.

You may have a number of medical conditions and are therefore prescribed several medicines from your doctor. As a result, some of the medicines that can be bought over the counter from pharmacies and other shops may be unsuitable for you.

SEE TABLE OPPOSITE

Problems that may happen with medicines that you can buy

- They may cause problems with other medicines you take.
- Some may make your kidney function worse.
- Some products contain things that are bad for you, like potassium, sodium or aluminium.

However, if you talk to your doctor or pharmacist, it should still be possible for you to buy suitable medicines to treat minor ailments.

Some points to remember when buying medicines

- It is very important to tell any doctor or pharmacist recommending a medicine for you about your renal condition and the medicines you are taking.
- You should only treat minor ailments by yourself for a few days. If your symptoms change, get worse or last for more than a couple of days, see your doctor.