

the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q I heard that you shouldn't take Tylenol for a hangover. Why not?

A. You heard right. Tylenol + alcohol = potential liver damage.

Tylenol (known generically as acetaminophen) is a popular pain reliever that is effective in reducing fevers and quelling mild to moderate pain.

Emergency rooms have recently seen an alarming increase in liver toxicity, caused by the interaction of alcohol and acetaminophen. In fact, it's estimated that 39% of all liver failure is caused by acetaminophen. If you have 3 or more drinks daily, and take acetaminophen, the combination *can* prove toxic to your liver (which works to process toxins for you), even with short term use. The recommended maximum dose is no more than 4000 milligrams of acetaminophen a day.

Signs of liver trouble include dark urine, yellowing of the eyes and/or skin, persistent nausea and/or vomiting, abdominal pain, and excessive tiredness. This combination of symptoms should lead you to seek medical care ASAP.

Over 600 products contain acetaminophen. Common "over-the-counter" (OTC) medications with acetaminophen include Alka-Seltzer Plus Liquid Gels®, Dayquil®, Excedrin®, Midol®, Nyquil®, Robitussin®, and Theraflu®. Acetaminophen is also found in many prescription drugs, including Vicodin, Percocet, and of course, Tylenol #3. It's important to know what you are putting in your body, since any drug can have negative side effects.

Is there an alternative to acetaminophen? Yes! Aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen work well for pain, and, although some people experience stomach irritation, these OTCs are not associated with liver toxicity.

Best hangover cure? Lots of water and time. And, read labels carefully if you need to take pain meds.



wildfact

Many believe that the word "beer" got its name from the Latin verb "bibere" which means "to drink."



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu

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