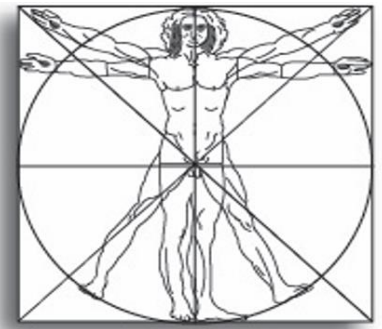


# SOUTHPORT PHYSIOTHERAPY CENTRE



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## Paracetamol or Ibuprofen: What's the difference?

Look in anyone's medicine cabinet and chances are, paracetamol and ibuprofen are likely to be there. But, what's the difference between these common drugs, and how do you know which one to take?



## What is Paracetamol?

Paracetamol is one of the most commonly used medications in the world. Paracetamol is often spoken of as 'Panadol', which is the brand name, not the drug name. It's been proven to reduce pain and fever, by reducing the intensity of pain signals to the brain. Paracetamol is well tolerated by all ages and is a safe and effective medication for mild to moderate pain and fever. It can be taken in tablet, capsule, intravenous or syrup form, and – as long as you follow the instructions on the pack – the risk of having an adverse reaction is low.

If your pain isn't under control with paracetamol, you should see a doctor.

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## **What is Ibuprofen?**

Ibuprofen is a non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug. It is often referred to as 'Nurofen' which is the brand name not the drug name.

Ibuprofen is effective for mild-to-moderate pain and fever if it's caused by inflammation. Arthritis, infection, toothache, period pain or swelling from a sprained ankle are examples of pain likely to be related to inflammation.

Always take Ibuprofen tablets and capsules with food or a drink of milk to reduce the chance of an upset stomach. Do not take it on an empty stomach. As with paracetamol, always follow the instructions that come with the medicine.

## **Should I take Panadol Osteo?**

Panadol Osteo is extra-strength paracetamol which is slow release. That means that it has the benefits of pain relief (from the paracetamol) but that the dose is drip fed over several hours. Consequently, this drug is ideal for management of chronic pain. It is meant to be taken routinely and regularly. However, if you have acute pain, you are better served taking regular strength paracetamol which will deliver the full dose in a quicker time frame.

## **What should I take if I have a headache?**

Paracetamol is the first line of drugs if you're trying to manage a headache.

While both medicines are safe, paracetamol has fewer risks associated with it among groups of people such as the elderly, and those with kidney disease or prone to gastrointestinal bleeding. If you're pregnant, paracetamol is also the safest choice.

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Ibuprofen is effective for both pain and fever if inflammation is a component, and you can take both Ibuprofen and Paracetamol at the same time over the short term if you're experiencing strong pain.

## **What is the difference between paracetamol and ibuprofen?**

The main difference between the two medications is that ibuprofen reduces inflammation, whereas paracetamol is an analgesic.

There's no advantage in taking ibuprofen or paracetamol brands such as Nurofen or Panadol over the cheaper chemist or supermarket versions.

The main takeout is that paracetamol is safer, because of those groups that are slightly more at risk, but if there's an inflammatory component, then you could consider taking ibuprofen.

If you have pain and it's not settling within a day or two, you should see a doctor for personalised advice.



*Please note:* The tips throughout this article serve as broad information and should not replace any advice you have been given by your medical practitioner.