

Variety of painkillers can be an ache to consumers

Choosing a painkiller can be a pain.

Wherever the ache, many drug companies will claim they can cure it. It's a cut-throat business and in the words of Joe Graedon, commentator for King Features Syndicate's *The People's Pharmacy*, "Pain is profitable." Advertisers use several tried and true slogans to draw customers in. These include "nine out of 10 doctors prefer," "arthritis formula" and "maximum strength."

The number and variety of painkillers is larger than many people realize. There are aspirin products (Bayer, Bufferin, Anacin), acetaminophen products (Tylenol, Datril), ibuprofen products (Nuprin, Motrin, Advil) and various combinations of the three.

Chances are, if the bank account allows, most people still use the same pain reliever Mom does or the kind they have always used.

Ever wonder why? A few people choose based on health reasons. Some can't take aspirin and some want specific results. Aspirin is useful in reducing the chance of heart attacks and eases the pain of arthritis.

Price is a factor for other people. Aspirin is generally the cheapest type of painkiller.

However, for those who do not have a set preference, advertising and known product reliability play a large part in which painkiller they purchase. Tylenol is the best selling painkiller, despite safety problems the product experienced a few years ago.

This is evident from the number of Tylenol commercials on television. Very few people would fail to recognize what "four out of five hospitals recommend..."

The side of the story consumers do not see is that Tylenol gives hospitals large price reductions if they buy in

Amanda Graves

Health

bulk. It's no wonder that four out of five hospitals recommend it when they get those kind of breaks.

Jonathan Ross, a public affairs spokesman for North Carolina Memorial Hospital, said that in terms of quantity, NCMH used Tylenol most, ibuprofen second, and aspirin third.

"If a patient is in pain, they are going to get Tylenol. Tylenol is used because it has fewer adverse side effects and works better with other prescribed drugs," Ross said.

While ibuprofen and aspirin are similar, ibuprofen has fewer side effects and is stronger than aspirin. Aspirin is used mostly by the hospital as an anticoagulant and as an anti-inflammatory drug, he said.

Still, everyone has a reason for choosing the pain reliever he or she prefers. But people who shell out \$4 to \$5 for Tylenol, instead of \$1.50 for generic acetaminophen, may not be getting their money's worth.

Studies show that in terms of relieving head and back pain, all name-brand and generic analgesics — aspirin, acetaminophen and ibuprofen — are equivalent.

Drug companies spend large sums developing new drugs. To protect their investments, they patent these drugs to keep other companies from profiting from their research. High-priced drugs are necessary to recover the money spent on developing them.

Generic drugs contain the same ingredients as the name brands. They are just produced after the company's patent expires. They are cheaper because

they don't have advertising costs and huge development fees.

Name brands, however, offer such things as special coatings, different drug forms (tablet, capsule or caplet) and specialized safety features. Most of this is just "sugar coating." Most generics offer similar safety features.

Federal Drug Administration Commissioner Frank Young said generic drugs were probably as good as any others, although the FDA had not checked all the brands. "The answer appears to be a qualified yes. Our job is not done, though, and we will keep that qualification until we are done."

The FDA found that "in most cases generic drugs are as good as brand name medications. Drugs that flunk are being withdrawn," Young said.

Even within the generic category, each analgesic has special capabilities.

Acetaminophen is good for people who are allergic to aspirin or for those whose stomachs are sensitive to it. However, unlike aspirin, acetaminophen doesn't reduce swelling associated with arthritis, although it will alleviate the pain.

"For minor aches and pains, especially those due to arthritis, aspirin is still the gold standard. You can not find a cheaper, more effective medicine," Graedon said.

Ibuprofen has similar abilities. People allergic to aspirin should also beware of ibuprofen. It causes nearly the same effects. However, it is the best analgesic for reducing menstrual pain.

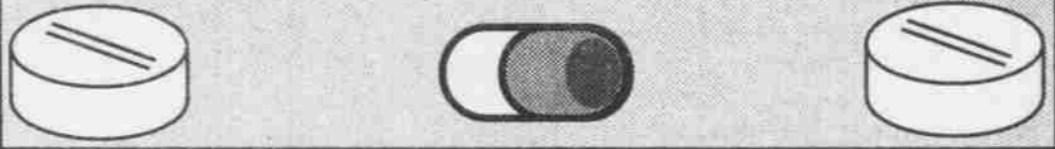
This is important for the consumer because most menstrual pain analgesics available in stores contain acetaminophen. Tracey Young, a pharmacist at Revco, recommended generic ibuprofen over the brand name analgesics.

While brand name menstrual pain analgesics usually will contain pyrilam-

Pain Relievers...

... and what they cost.

	Food Lion	Rite Aid
ASPIRIN 325 mg		
100 BAYER	\$4.69	\$4.49
100 GENERIC	\$0.57	\$1.09
ACETAMINOPHENE 500 mg		
100 TYLENOL	\$6.92	\$7.83
100 GENERIC	\$1.69	\$3.89
IBUPROPHEN 200 mg		
100 ADVIL	\$6.99	\$7.87
50 GENERIC	\$1.77	\$2.99



ine malaete or panabrom, the main ingredient is acetaminophen or ibuprofen. For this reason, generic ibuprofen is a reasonable solution — it relieves pain and inflammation and costs less than the name brand, Young said.

The patent on ibuprofen, which previously made it available only from brand name companies, has run out. It is now available in generic form.

"Consumers may be switching because they believe ibuprofen is safer and more effective than aspirin or acetaminophen," Graedon said. He added that while it did offer benefits similar to aspirin, if it was overused it could cause indigestion, heartburn and even ulcers.

All of these analgesics are available in generic form, though they are often difficult to find in the same store. One place where all the generic forms can

be found is Rite Aid on Franklin Street.

Doctors agree that consumers should use only the prescribed amounts of analgesics. Many people think taking larger dosages will speed the relief, which isn't true. Doctors recommend taking the lowest dosage consumers find effective.

Additionally, extended overuse of acetaminophen can cause liver and kidney damage and overuse of aspirin can cause the stomach to bleed.

But whatever the pain and whatever the choice of pain reliever, read the label. Most pain relievers contain similar ingredients and directions for use, but reading the label does a few things. It lets you know what you are taking and if you are taking the right amount; it will maybe save you a little money, and hopefully save you a lot of pain.

Dentists' efforts save Tooth Fairy

From Associated Press reports
KALAMAZOO, Mich. — State and federal governments were on the verge of putting the Tooth Fairy out of business, until Michigan's dentists came to the rescue.

The problem was that the Environmental Protection Agency had listed extracted teeth as medical waste to be pulverized and sterilized, not stuck under pillows so the Tooth Fairy could replace them with money.

But the Michigan Dental Association and dentists successfully argued that teeth should be excluded from the state's own hazardous medical waste list, and the EPA went along.

A Plainwell dentist, Dr. Robert Tisch, brought the problem to the attention of state Sen. Jack Welborn.

"I said, 'Do you guys realize you're outlawing the Tooth Fairy?'" Tisch said.

William Burke, assistant executive director of the dental association, explained that dental schools need teeth for study.

Because fluoride has cut the number of cavities youngsters get, schools have a hard time obtaining decayed teeth, he explained.

Michigan opted out of a two-year EPA pilot program to track medical wastes and adopted its own package, which does not include teeth.

The EPA also decided to drop teeth from the list.

SPORTS

Baseball rallies late to down UNC-C, 4-1

From staff and wire reports

CHARLOTTE — Freshman Paul Shuey picked up his sixth victory of the season as North Carolina scored four runs in the final four innings to down UNC-Charlotte 4-1 Tuesday night.

Shuey (6-1), a 6-foot-2, 190-pound right-hander from Raleigh, threw 22-3 innings of two-hit ball in relief of starter Derek Manning, who gave up five hits and struck out five in 6 1-3 innings of work.

North Carolina (31-6) won its fifth in a row as Ron Maurer, the ACC player of the week, extended his hitting streak to 22 games. The 49ers fell to 18-20.

The Tar Heels will face ECU tonight at 6 p.m. in Boshamer Stadium. UNC will be trying to avenge a 2-1 loss to the Pirates in Greenville on

April 3.

Women's tennis smokes Wake

WINSTON-SALEM — UNC's women's tennis team dealt Wake Forest a 6-2 loss Tuesday afternoon in an ACC matchup.

The Tar Heels, who improved to 16-5 overall and 3-1 in the ACC, won four of six singles matches and both doubles contests. The No. 3 doubles match was not played.

Winners for UNC in singles competitions included Cinda Gurney, Alisha Portnoy, Valerie Farmer and Gigi Neely. The doubles teams of Gurney and Gina Goblirsch and Farmer and Portnoy also won their matches.

The Tar Heels play next on Thursday when they host Duke in a 2 p.m. matchup at the Tennis Center.

Connecticut's Calhoun plans to meet with Corchiani

From Associated Press reports

STORRS, Conn. — Connecticut coach Jim Calhoun said he plans to meet with N.C. State guard Chris Corchiani Wednesday to discuss the possibility of Corchiani transferring to UConn for his final year of eligibility.

Corchiani, a 6-foot-1 junior considered among the nation's best point guards, said Monday he is considering transferring to six schools. In addition to Connecticut, the others are Kentucky, Louisiana State, New Orleans, Florida State and Syracuse.

"We're happy Chris is interested in us," Calhoun said Monday. "We are going through the proper channels, and I have been given permission to talk to Chris by officials at North Carolina State, including Jim Valvano."

Under NCAA rules, Corchiani must sit out next season if he transfers. However, Corchiani has retained attorney Mark Rodgers of West Palm Beach, Fla., to appeal the NCAA ruling in hopes of his playing at a new school next season.

in the major leagues on opening day soared 16.4 percent to a record \$578,930, the biggest offseason increase ever, according to an Associated Press survey.

This year's increase of \$81,676 was more than \$23,000 higher than the old record of \$58,525, set just a year ago. Salaries jumped 19.3 percent, but only \$47,697, in 1983.

The Kansas City Royals, who signed free agent pitchers Mark Davis and Storm Davis last winter, have the largest payroll in baseball at \$22,178,744, an average of \$821,435.

The \$19.3 million, five-year extension they signed Monday with first baseman Don Mattingly.

At the opposite end, the smallest payroll belongs to the Baltimore Orioles at \$8,961,584, an average of \$298,719 per person. Ninety players were at the minimum salary of \$100,000, including 11 of the 27 White Sox.

Wynne sparks Cubs to victory

CHICAGO — Marvell Wynne's pinch single with two out in the eighth inning gave the Chicago Cubs a sea-

son-opening 2-1 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies on a cold, windy Tuesday.

Ryne Sandberg opened the eighth with a single and went to second on a wild pitch. Lloyd McClendon struck out and Mark Grace was given an intentional walk. Luis Salazar then singled to center, but Sandberg was thrown out at the plate by center fielder Sil Campanuso as Grace took third.

Wynne followed with a single to right, scoring the winning run. Reliever Les Lancaster was the winner, and Jeff Parrett was the loser. Mitch Williams pitched the ninth inning for the save.

The game was played in 36-degree temperatures with a 26-mph wind blowing in from left field. Monday night's official opener was postponed because of rain and rescheduled for Thursday.

Pena leads Sox over Tigers

BOSTON — Tony Pena had three hits and two RBIs, and Wade Boggs was walked intentionally a record-tying three times Tuesday as the Boston Red Sox beat the Detroit Tigers for the 10th straight time, 4-2.

Boggs' three intentional walks tied a major league record for a nine-inning game, shared by many. Roger Maris

and Garry Templeton share the record of four in extra innings.

Detroit manager Sparky Anderson's strategy worked as the Red Sox were unable to capitalize on the intentional walks. The Red Sox left the bases loaded in the second and third innings and left two runners on in the fifth.

That left Pena to do the damage. Pena lined a single in the first, drove in two runs with a bases-loaded single in a four-run third, and ripped a double in the fifth.

Mike Boddicker, beaten by Detroit last June 14 before Boston began its winning streak, allowed two runs and five hits in five innings, then got the victory with relief help from Dennis Lamp, Rob Murphy and Lee Smith.

ECU ends Wolfpack streak

RALEIGH — Berry Narron drove in four runs Tuesday as East Carolina jumped out to a big lead and held off North Carolina State 8-5, breaking the Wolfpack's nine-game winning streak.

The Pirates (29-4) used Narron's two-run single to key a four-run fourth inning. East Carolina then added a single run in the fifth and three in the seventh for an 8-0 lead.

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