

# Paracetamol for babies and children

(Paracetamol is also known as Pamol, Panadol and Paracare)

## What is paracetamol?

Paracetamol (sounds like *paa-ra-SEE-ta-mol*) is a medicine to help reduce pain or fever.

- It is also known as Pamol, Paracare and Panadol.
- It can also be found in cold and flu medicines or pain relief medicines.

## Does my child need paracetamol?

Only give paracetamol if it's necessary. It can be used if your child:

- ✓ needs pain relief
- ✓ has a fever (temperature over 38.5°C)  
AND is miserable

Do NOT give paracetamol:

- ✗ to babies under 3 months of age without seeing a doctor first
- ✗ before vaccinations and only give it after vaccination if your child needs it.

## How much paracetamol should I give?

The dose of paracetamol depends on your child's weight.

Paracetamol liquid is available in two strengths – **120 mg in 5mL** (lower strength) and **250 mg in 5mL** (higher strength). Paracetamol tablets usually come as 500 mg tablets.

Child's weight	120 mg in 5mL	250 mg in 5mL	500 mg tablets
Less than 5 kg	Ask your doctor	Ask your doctor	x
6.5 kg	4 mL	2 mL	x
8 kg	5 mL	2.5 mL	x
10 kg	6 mL	3 mL	x
15 kg	9 mL	4.5 mL	x
20 kg	12 mL	6 mL	x
25 kg	15 mL	7.5 mL	x
30 kg	18 mL	9 mL	x
35 kg	21 mL	10 mL	1 tablet
40 kg	25 mL	12 mL	1 tablet
45 kg	28 mL	14 mL	1 tablet
50 kg	30 mL	15 mL	1 tablet
55–65 kg	Ask your doctor	Ask your doctor	1 to 2 tablets
65 kg or more	Ask your doctor	Ask your doctor	2 tablets

## My child's dose

Weigh your child, then check the dosing table above. Record each dose below. If you do not have a scale at home, ask at your doctor's surgery or pharmacy if you can check your child's weight there.

**Strength of paracetamol** (circle one): 120 mg/5 mL **OR** 250 mg/5 mL **OR** 500 mg tablets








**My child's weight:** ..... **Dose (mL):** .....

- Before each dose, check if your child still needs it.
- Wait at least four hours between doses.
- Do not give more than four doses in 24 hours.

Date	Dosing times
Date:	Time of dose 1: _____ Time of dose 2: _____ Time of dose 3: _____ Time of dose 4: _____
Date:	Time of dose 1: _____ Time of dose 2: _____ Time of dose 3: _____ Time of dose 4: _____
Date:	Time of dose 1: _____ Time of dose 2: _____ Time of dose 3: _____ Time of dose 4: _____
Notes:	

## Tips for giving paracetamol safely

Giving too much paracetamol can be dangerous.

<p><b>Weigh your child</b></p> 	<p>The correct dose (amount of medicine) depends on your child's weight and the strength of paracetamol.</p>
<p><b>Measure carefully</b></p> 	<p>Measure each dose using an oral syringe, medicine spoon or medicine cup.</p> <p><b>Do not use a kitchen spoon.</b></p>
<p><b>Timing</b></p> 	<p><b>Wait at least four hours between doses.</b></p> <p>Giving paracetamol more often is harmful.</p> <p>Before each dose, check if your child still needs it.</p>
<p><b>Read the ingredients</b></p> 	<p>Check other medicines your child is taking. Some medicines may also have paracetamol in them.</p> <p>Don't give your child the other medicine and paracetamol in the same day.</p>
<p><b>Check in with caregivers</b></p> 	<p>If someone else is caring for your child, ask if they have also given paracetamol.</p> <p>Check how much was given and when and add that to your dosing table.</p>
<p><b>Daily limit</b></p> 	<p><b>Do not give more than four doses of paracetamol in 24 hours.</b></p> <p>Giving your child more than the daily limit is very harmful to their liver.</p> <p>Do not give it for more than two days without medical advice.</p>
<p><b>As your child grows</b></p> 	<p>As your child grows the amount of paracetamol will need to be increased based on their weight to be sure that they are getting the correct dose.</p>

## What about side effects?

Paracetamol rarely causes side effects when used at the correct dose.

If your child gets signs of an allergic reaction such as skin rash, skin peeling or mouth ulcers, tell your doctor immediately.

## How to store paracetamol?

Keep all medicines in a locked or latched cupboard out of the reach and sight of children.

- Paracetamol doesn't need to be chilled – don't keep it in the fridge.
- Make sure the bottle has a child-resistant cap – ask your pharmacist about this.

## What if my child has too much?

Too much paracetamol can damage your child's liver. Common causes of overdose are:

- children helping themselves to paracetamol
- giving too many doses because of multiple caregivers
- giving the wrong dose or strength of liquid
- giving more than one paracetamol-containing medicine
- giving paracetamol for too long without medical advice.

If there is any chance your child has had too much, call your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or the Poisons Centre (0800 764 766) immediately.

- Do not wait for signs of overdose.
- Late signs of overdose may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, yellow skin or eyes, poor appetite, confusion or extreme sleepiness.

## 24-hour advice

- If at any time you are worried about your baby or child ring Healthline for free 24-hour health advice on 0800 611 116.
- For more information about health conditions or medicines, visit [www.healthnavigator.org.nz](http://www.healthnavigator.org.nz)

