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Naproxen tablets for pain and inflammation (Naprosyn, Nexocin, Stirlescent)

Naproxen is a medicine called a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. It is also known as 'an NSAID'.

Before you take naproxen, let your doctor know if you have ever had a bad reaction to any other anti-inflammatory painkiller.

Make sure you take naproxen as directed on the label of the pack. Your dose will depend upon your condition and the brand of tablet prescribed.

About naproxen

Type of medicine	Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)
Used for	Relief of pain and inflammation
Also called	Naprosyn®; Nexocin®; Stirlescent® Vimovo® (naproxen in combination with esomeprazole)
Available as	Tablets, effervescent (soluble) tablets and oral liquid medicine

[Anti-inflammatory painkillers](#) like naproxen are sometimes called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), or just 'anti-inflammatories'. Naproxen is used to treat painful conditions such as [arthritis](#), [sprains and strains](#), [backache](#), [period \(menstrual\) cramps](#), and [gout pain](#).

Naproxen works by blocking the effect of chemicals in your body, called cyclo-oxygenase (COX) enzymes. These enzymes help to make other chemicals in the body, called prostaglandins. Some prostaglandins are produced at sites of injury or damage, and cause pain and inflammation. By blocking the effect of COX enzymes, fewer prostaglandins are produced, which means pain and inflammation are eased.

Naproxen is available on prescription. Short courses of tablets for the treatment of period pain are also available to buy at pharmacies.

Before taking naproxen tablets

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking naproxen, it is important that your doctor or pharmacist knows:

- If you have asthma or any other allergic disorder.
- If you have ever had a stomach or duodenal ulcer, or if you have an inflammatory bowel disorder such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.
- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby, or breastfeeding.
- If you are over 65 years of age.
- If you have liver problems or kidney disease.
- If you have a heart condition, are at higher risk of heart attack, or have had a problem with your blood vessels or circulation.
- If you have high blood pressure.
- If you have ever had blood clotting problems.
- If you have high blood sugar or cholesterol levels.
- If you are a smoker.
- If you have a connective tissue disorder, such as systemic lupus erythematosus (an inflammatory condition also called lupus, or SLE).

- If you are taking any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to aspirin or other NSAID (such as indometacin, diclofenac, and ibuprofen), or to any other medicine.

How to take naproxen

- Before you start taking naproxen, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. There are several strengths and different formulations of naproxen tablet available. Some formulations have a special coating to help protect your stomach against irritation. They are called 'enteric coated (EC)' or 'gastro-resistant' tablets. The manufacturer's leaflet will give you more information about your tablets, and provide a full list of side-effects which you may experience from taking them.
- Make sure you take the tablets exactly as your doctor or pharmacist tells you to:
 - If you are taking naproxen for a long-term condition (such as ankylosing spondylitis or other forms of arthritis), it is usual for adults to be prescribed 500 mg-1 g daily, to be taken as either a single dose, or divided into two doses during the day. Doses for children depend upon the age of the child.
 - For short-term conditions (such as muscle/tendon pain or sprains/strains), the usual dose is 250 mg taken three or four times daily when needed. It is often recommended that a double dose (500 mg) be taken for the first dose.
 - For gout, the usual dose is 750 mg for the first dose, and then 250 mg every eight hours until the attack has passed.
 - If you have bought naproxen over the counter for period pain, take 250 mg three times daily, for a maximum of three days.
 - The dose of Vimovo® is one tablet twice daily before meals.

- As a general rule, taking naproxen with a glass of milk or after eating some food can help to prevent side-effects such as indigestion. The exception to this rule is if you are taking Vimovo® tablets – these should be taken at least 30 minutes before a meal.
- Many people find it helps to take naproxen tablets with a drink of water.
- Some brands of naproxen are specially coated to protect your stomach from irritation. Do not chew or break the tablets, as this will stop the coating from working properly.
- If you have been given enteric coated (EC) tablets, do not take any indigestion remedies during the two hours before taking naproxen, or during the two hours after taking it. This is because antacids stop the protective coating from working as it should.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it is nearly time for your next dose, in which case leave out the missed dose. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Your doctor will try to prescribe you the lowest dose for the shortest time in order to reduce the risk of side-effects. If you need to take naproxen for a long time, your doctor may want to prescribe another medicine along with it to protect your stomach or intestines from irritation. Alternatively, you may be prescribed a brand of naproxen which already contains a protective medicine. An example of a combination brand is Vimovo® which contains naproxen and esomeprazole.
- Try to keep any regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress, and is especially important if you are taking naproxen for a long-term condition.
- If you have asthma, symptoms such as wheeze or breathlessness can be made worse by anti-inflammatories such as naproxen. If this happens to you, you should stop taking the tablets and see your doctor as soon as possible.

- If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with an anti-inflammatory like naproxen. This is because you should not take these tablets with any other anti-inflammatory painkiller, some of which are available in cold and flu remedies which can be bought over the counter.
- If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

Can naproxen cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with naproxen. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

N aproxen side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Indigestion, heartburn (reflux), stomach pain	If the discomfort continues, speak with your doctor
Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)	Stick to simple meals - avoid rich or spicy foods
Diarrhoea or constipation	Drink plenty of water

Important: if you experience any of the following less common but more serious symptoms, stop taking naproxen and contact your doctor for advice straightaway:

- If you have any breathing difficulties such as wheeze or breathlessness.
- If you have any signs of an allergic reaction such as swelling around your mouth or face, or a severe itchy skin rash.

- If you pass blood or black stools, vomit blood, or have severe tummy (abdominal) pains.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to this medicine, call your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store naproxen tablets

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Naproxen 250 mg and 500 mg Tablets](#); Strides Pharma UK Limited, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated December 2022.

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Vimovo® 500 mg/20 mg modified-release tablets](#); AstraZeneca UK Limited, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated February 2023.
- [Manufacturer's PIL, Naproxen 50 mg/ml oral suspension](#); Thornton and Ross Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated June 2020.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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