

You or your loved one is taking a medication from a medication class called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Examples of NSAIDs are aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil[®], Motrin[®]), naproxen (Aleve[®]), celecoxib (Celebrex[®]), diclofenac (Voltaren[®]), meloxicam (Mobic[®]), indomethacin (Indocin[®]), and piroxicam (Feldene[®]). NSAIDs are primarily used to help with pain. They are also commonly used for arthritis and migraine headaches.

Oral NSAIDs usually come as a liquid, capsules, tablets, or chewable tablets, that can all be swallowed. Naproxen also comes as an extended-release (ER) tablet. ER tablets are long-acting and should not be crushed. Diclofenac also comes in a topical form, such as a cream, gel, patch, or solution. Make sure to follow the hospice team's instructions carefully when using NSAIDs.

Possible side effects of NSAIDs:

Seek emergency medical help if you or your loved one have any of the following signs of a severe allergic reaction:

- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Hives
- trouble breathing

Side effects of NSAIDs may be concerning. The hospice team will watch for serious side effects and make changes to the medication if necessary. Contact the hospice team immediately if you or your loved one is experiencing one or more of these serious side effects:

- Stomach ulcers, severe abdominal pain
- Black, tarry or bloody stools
- Vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- Blood in urine or dark urine
- Unable to urinate or change in amount of urine passed
- Severe fatigue, severe dizziness, passing out
- Swelling of arms/legs, chills, sore throat
- Excessive weight gain
- Chest pain
- Severe headache
- Abnormal heartbeat
- Ringing in ears

Less serious side effects of using NSAIDs include:

- Abdominal pain
- Heartburn
- Nausea/vomiting
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Passing gas
- Throat/nose irritation

Other things to be aware of when using NSAIDs:

- The risk of stomach ulcers and bleeding increases when oral NSAIDs are used with low-dose aspirin, warfarin (Coumadin[®]), apixaban (Eliquis), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), steroids (such as prednisone or dexamethasone) or alcohol. Monitor closely for signs and symptoms of a stomach ulcer such as black, tarry or bloody stools, or vomiting blood or something that looks like it has coffee grounds in it. Contact the hospice team immediately if you or your loved one experiences these symptoms.
- Taking an NSAID with food or milk may help reduce nausea and other gastrointestinal side effects.

Contact the hospice team if you or your loved one's symptoms get worse or do not improve.

Reference: Clinical Pharmacology Last Updated Feb 2024