



# Acetaminophen Protocol

revised October 2008

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## Preamble

Acetaminophen is a safe, well-tolerated over-the-counter drug that is effective for the relief of mild pain and pyrexia. In cases of prolonged contact with patients, particularly children, a simple analgesic or antipyretic may be administered.

## Requirements

1. Fully licensed Technician or Technician-Paramedic.
2. Certification in acetaminophen protocol by the Medical Director.
3. Verbal consent from parent, in the case of a minor patient.

## Indications

1. Pain (as documented by a subjective complaint).
2. Pyrexia (as documented by a suitable device).

## Contraindications

1. Age 0-3 months.
2. Altered level of consciousness.
3. Risk of aspiration.
4. Known allergy to acetaminophen.
5. Contraindication to oral administration of medications (e.g. abdominal pain or trauma, facial or head injury).
6. Short transport time (less than 20 minutes).
7. Acetaminophen administered to the patient in previous 4 hours.

## Drug Doses and Frequencies

Drug may be available and administered in a variety of formats (tablets, chewable tabs, syrup, or drops). Attendants must be familiar with all formats and concentrations.

Age-based:

4 – 11 months: 80 mg  
12 – 23 months: 120 mg  
2 – 3 years: 160 mg  
4 – 5 years: 240 mg  
6 – 8 years: 320 mg  
9 – 10 years: 400 mg  
11 – 12 years: 480 mg  
>12 years: 650 mg

If weight known:

15 mg/kg (maximum dose 1000 mg) (May round off dose to nearest 10 mg)

Acetaminophen is administered as a single, one-time oral dose. If the patient vomits after the acetaminophen is administered, a repeat dose is **not** administered.

## Procedure

1. Perform patient assessment and record vital signs.
2. Assess that patient meets criteria for this protocol.
3. Ensure there are no contraindications to use of this protocol.
4. Document presence of pain or pyrexia.
5. Obtain verbal parental consent, in case of a minor patient.
6. Administer acetaminophen using age-based dosing schedule.

### **Documentation Requirements**

The following information must be documented on the patient care report form:

1. Patient's presenting signs and symptoms, including vital signs.
2. Initial temperature (if pyrexia as complaint).
3. History of pain, its severity, character, and associated symptoms (if pain is complaint).
4. Verbal parental consent, in case of a minor patient.
5. Dose and formulation of acetaminophen used, and time dose administered.
6. Repeat assessment and vital signs, as indicated.
7. Changes from baseline, if any, that occur during treatment or transport.
8. Signature and license number of the EMS personnel performing any transfer of function skills.

### **Certification Requirements**

1. Attend lectures on use of acetaminophen, including its use in patients with pain or pyrexia.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the pharmacology and mechanism of action of acetaminophen.
3. Pass a written examination.
4. Certification is by the Medical Director.

### **Recertification Requirements**

1. Review class and recertification is done every 12 months.
2. A record will be kept to document all cases where this protocol is used.

### **Decertification**

1. Decertification is at the discretion of the Medical Director or the Provincial Medical Director, Emergency Medical Services, Manitoba Health & Healthy Living.

## **Quality Assurance Requirements**

1. Appropriate quality assurance policies must be in place. The Medical Director or designate must review all instances where this protocol is used. As a minimum, the following must be assessed:

- i) appropriateness of implementation
- ii) adherence to protocol
- iii) any deviation from the protocol
- iv) corrective measures taken, if indicated

2. Yearly statistics for protocol use compiled and forwarded to Emergency Medical Services, Manitoba Health & Healthy Living