Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

Acetaminophen is a centrally acting analgesic and antipyretic without significant anti-inflammatory, anti-coagulant or narcotic effects. In EMS practice, it is primarily given to pediatric patients.

Indications

1. Pediatric patients with a fever greater than 101.
2. Pediatric patients with pain, who will not undergo surgery. If there is a possibility of surgery (i.e. trauma), patients should be given nothing by mouth.

Administration

1. Dosage is 15mg/kg, given orally.
2. If using ambulance stock, administer once the patient is in the ambulance and ready for transport.
3. If using medication provided by the parents, assist them in giving the medication on scene.

Precautions

1. Do not give if the patient has an allergy to acetaminophen, which is extremely rare.
2. If the patient vomits after administration, re-dose at half the initial dose.

Notes

1. Metabolized in the liver: Only excessive use of Tylenol in patients with liver disease can increase the risk of hepatotoxicity, not the recommended adult dose of 1000 mg every four hours.
2. Onset of action varies widely from 10 mins to 90 mins with a mean of 30 mins.
3. The half-life also varies between 2 and 3 hours. Therefore some people will find that pain relief is markedly less at three hours.
4. Studies show that the dose of acetaminophen of 15 mg/kg is equivalent to a dose of ibuprofen of 10 mg/kg. The half-life of ibuprofen is about 50% longer.