

## Hydrocodone & Acetaminophen

Names	Hydrocodone (hye-droe-KOE-done) and acetaminophen (a-set-a-MEE-noe-fen) are the generic drug names in this combination medication. Lortab® and Vicodin® are brand names. There are many other brand names for this combination medication. Acetaminophen is the main ingredient in Tylenol® and may be found in many other products.
What is it For and How Does It Work?	This medication relieves moderate to moderately severe pain. Hydrocodone is in a class of medications called opioid (narcotic) analgesics. Hydrocodone relieves pain by changing the way the brain and nervous system respond to pain. It may be habit forming. Acetaminophen relieves fever and pain. It is not an opioid.
How Do I Take This Medication?	The combination product comes as a tablet, capsule, or liquid. Take the tablet or capsule with a full glass of water. If it upsets your stomach, take it with food. Do not use more medicine than your doctor prescribes.
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are allergic to acetaminophen, hydrocodone, , or any other medications</li><li>• or anyone in your family has ever abused drugs or alcohol or had a drug addiction</li><li>• are taking any other medications - particularly other opioid, sedative, or anti-anxiety medications - or medications that contain acetaminophen or herbal products</li><li>• have breathing problems, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)</li><li>• have or have ever had difficulty urinating; seizures; or thyroid, intestinal, liver, pancreas, gallbladder, or kidney disease</li><li>• have had a head injury, seizures, or a paralytic ileus</li><li>• are breastfeeding, pregnant, or trying to get pregnant</li></ul> <p><b>This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about <u>all</u> prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal, or diet supplements that you take.</b></p>

## How Do I Use and Store Hydrocodone?

- Your doctor will tell you how much of this medicine to use and how often. Do not use more medicine than your doctor tells you.
- Take this medicine on an empty stomach. If it upsets your stomach, you can take it with food.
- Do not use extra medicine to make up for a missed dose.
- Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children.
- Store it at room temperature and away from light and excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom).
- Keep this medication in a safe place so that no one else can take it. Keep track of how many tablets or capsules or how much liquid is left so you will know if any medication is missing.
- **Properly discard any unused medication. Do not toss it in the garbage or flush it down the toilet.** Roswell has drug disposal containers available on the 1st floor of the main hospital. They are located just past the ATM on the left. New York has *Take Back* programs for the collection of household drugs. Go to the NY Department of Conservation website [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67720.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67720.html) and click on “Find a free collection site near you”. **If there is an urgent need to dispose of your medication and there are no drop off locations near you:**
  - Mix the medication in water and add salt, dirt, ashes, or cat litter. Don’t hide it in food. Put the mixture in a bag you can seal and then put in the trash as close to trash collection day as possible.

## What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

Although side effects from acetaminophen and hydrocodone are not common, they can occur. Tell your doctor have any of these side effects and they are severe or they don’t go away:

- lightheadedness, dizziness, or drowsiness
- constipation
- difficulty urinating (peeing)
- upset stomach, stomach pain, or vomiting
- rash or itching

### How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- To help avoid dizziness when you change positions, get up slowly. Rest your feet on the floor for a few minutes before you stand up.
- To help avoid constipation, eat high fiber foods and drink at least 2-3 quarts of fluid (especially water) every 24 hours, unless you are instructed otherwise.
- Ask your doctor about medication to prevent or treat constipation or nausea.
- Check with your doctor before putting anything on a rash. Keep the area clean and dry.
- If nausea or itching lasts more than 1 week, talk to your doctor.

### When Should I Call the Doctor?

**Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if you have life threatening situation such as symptoms of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis):** chest tightness, trouble breathing, swelling in your face or tongue, feeling your throat is closing up, tingling throat or mouth, dizziness, fast/pounding heartbeat (palpitations), nausea and vomiting, skin that looks gray or blue

#### **Call your doctor immediately if you have:**

- signs of an allergic reaction: itching, rash hives
- any sign of an overdose: difficulty breathing, excessive sleepiness, hallucinations, fainting, weak muscles, cold and clammy skin, slow heartbeat (pulse) or a bluish color in your skin, fingernails, lips, or around your mouth
- seizures
- vomiting more than once in 24 hours
- yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes

### What Else Should I Know About this Medication?

- Take this medication exactly as prescribed by your provider.
- This drug may cause drowsiness or dizziness. Do not drive a car, operate heavy machinery, or participate in other possibly dangerous activities until you know how this medication affects you.
- Do not drink alcohol while on this medication.
- Do not let anyone else take your medication.
- Tell your doctor if your pain is not well controlled, or if you have new or a different type of pain.
- Keep all appointments with your doctor. If your pain is not controlled or if it continues, call your doctor.

- Too much acetaminophen may cause liver damage. Many combination medicines contain acetaminophen, including products with brand names such as Alka-Seltzer Plus®, Comtrex®, Drixoral®, Excedrin Migraine®, Midol®, Sinutab®, Sudafed®, Theraflu®, Vanquish®, and Tylenol®. Carefully check the labels of all the medications you are taking. Add up the milligrams of acetaminophen in each product. **The maker of Tylenol and the Food and Drug Administration recommend you do not take more than 3 grams (3000 milligrams) in 24 hours.** (Your doctor may set a higher or lower daily limit, depending on your individual needs. Historically, the maximum daily dose is **3 grams (3,000 milligrams) in 24 hours.**)
- Hydrocodone may cause serious or life-threatening breathing problems, especially during the first 24 to 72 hours of your treatment and any time your dose is increased. Your doctor will monitor you carefully during your treatment.. The risk that you will develop breathing problems may be higher if you are an older adult or are weak or malnourished due to disease.
- If you have been taking this medication for an extended period of time, do not stop taking it suddenly. Your doctor may need to decrease your dose gradually to prevent withdrawal symptoms.
- Hydrocodone is a controlled substance. Prescriptions may be refilled only a limited number of times; ask your pharmacist if you have any questions.
- If you would like more information about hydrocodone and acetaminophen, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.