



A Note Regarding Tylenol (Acetaminophen) in Children

There have been several recent studies that suggest an association between frequent use of Tylenol (acetaminophen) and increased risk of asthma in children. This does not necessarily mean that there is a causal relationship (i.e. using acetaminophen *causes* asthma) but merely an association between the two. It may be that frequent febrile illnesses in kids are associated with more asthma (kids with asthma get sick more than kids without asthma) and that when sick with fever, parents tend to give their kids Tylenol.

It is interesting that the initial study that demonstrated this association was actually set up with the *intent* of showing that use of ibuprofen was associated with asthma. The acetaminophen group of kids was meant as the control group. The study ended up showing the opposite of what was proposed: that use of acetaminophen was associated with increased risk of asthma and the use of ibuprofen may actually be protective.

Until more studies are done to clarify this association, I am recommending that if fever reducers or analgesics are indicated, that parents use ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.) preferentially over acetaminophen when possible. Infants under 6 months of age should receive acetaminophen and not ibuprofen. Children with headaches from head injuries should also not be given ibuprofen as it may increase the risk of bleeding.

I hope this is not too confusing. I will update the information when it is available.

--Be Well

Drew Nash, M.D.