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## Safe and Responsible Use of Acetaminophen

*A position statement from the American Academy of Pain Medicine*

### **AAPM Supports Safe and Responsible Use of Acetaminophen**

The American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM), which represents the medical specialty of Pain Medicine, supports the safe and responsible use of acetaminophen both in over-the-counter and prescription medicines. While there are risks associated with the misuse of acetaminophen, the benefits to patients suffering from both short-term and chronic pain are significant.

The misuse and abuse of both over-the-counter and prescription medicines are significant social and medical problems that must be addressed responsibly. But, the under-treatment of pain is also a longstanding and significant medical and social problem that also must be addressed responsibly.

AAPM recognizes that analgesics that combine acetaminophen and an opioid do pose additional risk, for patients with pain conditions that require doses of the opioid component for sufficient pain relief that exceed safe doses of the acetaminophen component.

AAPM supports measures that reduce the risk of misuse and abuse of medications without deterring access to appropriate pain care for legitimate patients and the need for physicians to adhere to responsible analgesic prescribing practices. The Academy will continue to work towards these goals through advocacy, research, promotion of best clinical practices, and continuing medical education.

AAPM, founded in 1983, is the recognized authority on the evaluation and care of patients with pain. It is a professional community of physicians with a sustained interest in pain disorders and their management, with a background in related specialties such as anesthesiology, internal medicine, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, physiatry, family practice, and psychiatry.

*Approved by the AAPM Executive Committee on July 1, 2009.*