

**New concerns about pain relief medications**

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*In light of the controversy surrounding OTC and prescription pain relievers, Dr. Tom Wickiewicz, MD, offers tips on relieving knee pain without medication.* New York, NY (PRWEB via PR Web Direct) March 9, 2005 Like a lot of people who have heard about the recent FDA concerns about pain relief medications like the prescription drugs Vioxx and Celebrex and over-the-counter medications Aleve and Tylenol, you may be concerned about taking a pill when your knee hurts after your morning jog or afternoon tennis match. You don't want to be in pain but you may not be sure what your options are.

"A lot of knee pain can be relieved without medication," said Dr. Tom Wickiewicz, MD, Chief of the Sports Medicine and Shoulder Service at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. "In fact, it may be better to try to find the cause of the pain and how to deal with it before you start masking it with pain relievers."

Dr. Wickiewicz offers the following tips for pain-free knees:

- " Ice your knee after exercise. Applying ice for twenty minutes at a time, three or four times a day will relieve pain and any associated swelling. Bags of frozen vegetables work well for this because they conform to the knee's shape. Do not apply ice directly to the skin as frostbite may occur. Wrap the ice in a towel before putting on the knee.
- " Check your shoes. Make sure that you are wearing the proper shoes for your activity and that you replace them every three months or at the first signs of wear. Some people may benefit from over-the-counter orthotics, which are available at many sporting goods stores.
- " Don't over do. Pain is often a sign that you are pushing your body too hard. If jogging is making your knees sore, try power walking instead, or cut back on jogging for a few weeks.
- " Stretch and strengthen. Make sure that you warm up and stretch before you start exercising. Work on strengthening your thighs and calves so that those muscles help support your knee.
- " Consult an orthopaedic surgeon. An orthopaedic surgeon can evaluate your knee pain and help you decide the best course of treatment, whether that's a new exercise routine, physical therapy, custom fitted braces or medical or surgical options.

There may be times when you do need to take some kind of medication to get adequate pain relief. Dr. Wickiewicz suggests that you be sure to read the labels of over-the-counter medications thoroughly and follow their instructions. If you take a prescription pain reliever, make sure you talk with your doctor about how to use it properly.

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