

Did you know?..... **RX** Information from Jenny

SUFFERING FROM ESOPHAGEAL PAIN?
MAYBE YOU AREN'T TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS CORRECTLY

Many drugs surprise patients by causing esophageal pain. Some medicines are notorious for causing esophageal ulcers like tetracyclines, bisphosphonates (Actonel, Boniva, Fosamax), NSAIDS (Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Voltaren, Naproxen) and potassium chloride. The potential to cause pain and possibly ulcers is due to ingredients that are corrosive to the esophagus plus dosage forms that add to the problem. Some gelatin caps can stick to the esophagus if they are not washed down. In cases such as potassium chloride, the tablet is big and can get stuck. Most of the injuries heal within days, but they can progress to severe esophageal damage if left unchecked.

Most cases of esophageal pain occur because patients fail to take their medications correctly. It is of utmost importance to drink a FULL glass of water and not lay down right after taking oral medicines. Otherwise, the medicine might not clear the esophagus or get refluxed back up. The elderly and Parkinson's patients are especially susceptible to this drug-induced esophagitis (inflammation of the esophagus) due to existing swallowing disorders and/or reflux problems. Also, patients taking anticholinergic drugs (oxybutynin, dicyclomine and Atrovent), as well as antihistamines (Benadryl, Claritin) and antidepressants such as amitriptyline, can suffer from decreased saliva production and slowed gastrointestinal motility which can increase exposure to irritating drugs. At risk patients may want to consider alternative formulations such as liquids, topicals and coated tablets that are easier to swallow or, crush pills if appropriate.

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