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To
From Matthew Davis, M.D., M.Sc., FRCPC, DRCPSC
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Subject Clarification on acetaminophen for age 12-17

SWORBHP Region Paramedics

We appreciate the excellent efforts by our region's paramedics to deliver much needed pain relief to our patients, and we know this is very valued by our adolescent patients. As we have been auditing the care through multiple feedback responses, we have heard that the formatting and wording of the medical directive have been contributing to some practice confusion.

A key concern appears to be the way the directive is laid out. Paramedics can see at the top of the directive that patients **12 years of age and older** meet the Indications and Conditions for acetaminophen administration; however, they must then scroll further down in the directive to the Treatment section to identify that there is a separate dosing consideration based on age.

This creates an opportunity for the age-based dosing distinction to be missed. A second contributing factor may be the clinical context on scene, where paramedics encounter an adolescent patient who appears physically adult-sized, such as a 16 year old weighing 100 kg, and inadvertently administer the adult dose based on appearance rather than age.

It is important to remember that all patients greater and equal to 12 years of age **and** under 18 years of age should be provided a dose of 500 or 650 mg (depending on what dose your service carries) of acetaminophen regardless of weight.

The Analgesia Medical Directive is currently under revision, and the use of liquid based acetaminophen and ibuprofen is being reviewed with the goal of expanding the patient population who can receive appropriate weight-based analgesia.

We appreciate your attention to this patient safety issue.

Sincerely,



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