

Paracetamol formulations: presentation activity

Paracetamol can be taken in a number of ways and can be bought in many different formulations.

Common ones are tablets (500 mg), fizzy dispersible tablets (500 mg), paediatric oral solutions (120 mg/5 cm³), oral suspensions (250 mg/cm³), and suppositories (125 mg). It is also sold in capsules as a mixture with other active ingredients such as codeine and caffeine. Work in small groups and discuss why there might be advantages in having a number of formulations. Comment on the doses available and suggest a target group for each one.

Present your findings to the group, perhaps as a poster or as an audio-visual presentation eg Powerpoint presentation.

Hints on presentations

In the presentation you could include the following:

- the conditions that paracetamol helps to relieve or cure, including technical terms such as analgesic, antipyretic and anti-inflammatory;
- the side effects of paracetamol, and the alternative treatments for people who are affected by them;
- the historical development of paracetamol, including the achievements of those responsible for the main developments;
- the chemistry involved in developing the medicine in a usable form; and
- the nature and importance of clinical trials.

You may find information in reference books, in libraries, in pharmacies and by contacting the ABPI (Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry or pharmaceutical companies .

Making a poster

In making a poster the following hints may be useful;

- your poster should be clearly set out, the structure should be clear at a glance;
- people do not like reading a lot of text.
- Diagrams and flow charts are much easier to take in;

text should be

- readable from at least 2 m;
- explanations should be separate from the main story, perhaps in distinctive boxes; and
- the level must be appropriate for the expected audience: you will need to think about what the audience is likely to know already.

Making an audio-visual presentation

In making an audio-visual presentation the following hints may be useful:

- before you start, make sure you have everything ready and you know how to switch on the OHP or operate the data projector and that it is focussed correctly;
- start the presentation with something designed to capture attention and to help your audience to know what to expect;
- do not read directly from notes: use notes if you need to, but always talk directly to your audience;
- people get bored if they have nothing to do but listen to you talking: make sure that there is always something to look at as well;
- make sure your visual aids are prepared well beforehand: they are a very effective way of getting information across to your audience;

- if you are drawing formulae on a white board or black board make sure that you know them by heart (draw them out beforehand): you should not have to keep looking at your notes to make sure that you have got something right;
- remember that you are always more familiar with your subject matter than your audience: give them time to take in what you are saying before going on to the next stage;
- and mannerisms are irritating, so try to stand still, look at your audience and do not wave your hands about, or keep scratching your nose or trip over the OHP lead!