OTC Medicines: Your First Line of Treatment
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From head to toe, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are the first line of treatment Americans trust to take care of their common health conditions and minor medical emergencies.

Each year, millions of us rely on trusted over-the-counter medicines to get well, stay well, and feel well. These medicines deliver safe, effective, and affordable treatment, for example, for relief of pain, cold and allergy symptoms, heartburn, and various skin conditions. They offer the convenience of real-time availability when and where we need them. They provide the peace of mind of having access to everyday treatments we trust when minor medical emergencies strike. They empower us to make informed choices and take better care of ourselves and our families. They’re a vital part of our healthcare and our country’s healthcare system.
OTC Medicines: Your First Line of Treatment from Head to Toe

Americans trust OTC medicines to treat a wide range of health conditions each and every day. Medical experts recommend OTC medicines as the first line of treatment for everything from headaches and allergies to low back pain and gastrointestinal complaints.

1. HEADACHE
   According to the National Headache Foundation, OTC analgesics such as aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen, and ketoprofen are recommended as the first line treatment for tension-type headaches.

2. ALLERGIC RHINITIS (hay fever)
   The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology and the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology recommend OTC antihistamines as treatment for allergic rhinitis.

3. ALLERGIC CONJUNCTIVITIS (pink eye)
   Topical antihistamines and vasoconstrictor agents are recommended OTC treatments for allergic conjunctivitis according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

4. EAR ACHE
   The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians recommend the OTC analgesics acetaminophen and ibuprofen as mainstay for treating ear ache associated with otitis media.

5. CARIES PREVENTION (cavities)
   According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, fluoride toothpastes and mouth rinses are the primary measure for cavity prevention.

6. COUGH IN CHRONIC BRONCHITIS
   The OTC cough suppressant dextromethorphan is recommended for cough relief in adults with chronic bronchitis according to the American College of Chest Physicians.
HEARTBURN
According to the American College of Gastroenterology, antacids, proton pump inhibitors, and H2 receptor antagonists are recommended OTC treatments for heartburn.

ATOPIK DERMATITIS (eczema)
The American Academy of Dermatology recommends topical corticosteroids and emollients as first line OTC treatments for atopic dermatitis, more commonly known as eczema.

CONSTIPATION
OTC agents such as milk of magnesia, bisacodyl, and polyethylene glycol are recommended for the treatment of constipation according to the American Gastroenterological Association.

ATHLETE’S FOOT
According to the American Academy of Dermatology, topical OTC antifungal medicines containing the agents clotrimazole, ketoconazole, miconazole, terbinafine, or tolnaftate are recommended for the treatment of athlete’s foot.

TOBACCO DEPENDENCE
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend OTC smoking cessation products like nicotine skin patches, lozenges, and gums as first line therapy options for tobacco dependence.

LOW BACK PAIN
Acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are recommended first line OTC treatments for low back pain according to the American College of Physicians and the American Pain Society.

HIP & KNEE PAIN
According to the American College of Rheumatology, acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are recommended first line OTC treatments for hip and knee osteoarthritis (OA) pain.
REFERENCES

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