

Fast Facts

Headaches

- Pain in any part of your head
- Can affect one or both sides, be on one side or radiate to multiple areas, come on suddenly or gradually and lasts from less than an hour to a few days
- Most headaches aren't related to any serious illness (usually are caused by a problem with pain-sensitive structures of the head or overactivity of certain chemicals in your brain, nerves or blood vessels of the skull or muscles of head/neck--often a combination of these factors)
- Common primary headaches: cluster headaches, migraines with or without aura and tension headaches

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p>Cluster: excruciating pain near one eye with possible radiation to other areas, restlessness, excessive tearing/redness/swelling around the affected eye, eyelid drooping of affected eye, stuffy/runny nose on affected side, forehead/facial swelling and pale or flushed face</p> <p>Migraine with or without Aura (4 stages): <i>Prodrome</i> = constipation, food cravings, neck stiffness, increased thirst/urination, frequent yawning and mood changes (from depression to euphoria) <i>Aura</i> = visual changes (flashes of light or wavy vision) and/or sensory (touching), motor (movement) or verbal (speech) disturbances. <i>Headache</i> = throbbing or pulsing pain in head, nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light/sound, blurred vision and lightheadedness <i>Post-drome</i> = extremely tired or elated, confusion, moodiness, dizziness, weakness and continued sensitivity to light/sound for up to 24 hours</p> <p>Tension: mild to moderate pain (like a tight band around head), tenderness of scalp, neck and shoulders</p>	<p>Goal: decrease severity/duration of pain, & prevent future headaches</p> <p>Cluster: -Oxygen -Medications (sumatriptan, octreotide, lidocaine and dihydroergotamine)</p> <p>Migraines with or without Aura: -Pain relievers (ibuprofen or aspirin for mild cases or sumatriptan, ergotamine, anti-nausea medication, opioid pain medication and glucocorticoids for severe cases)</p> <p>Tension: -Pain relievers (ibuprofen or aspirin)</p> <p>All: -Cold packs/heating pad -Hot shower -Resting in quiet/dark room</p>	<p>Prevention is key</p> <p>Lifestyle Changes: -Regular sleep schedule (get enough without too much) -Exercising regularly (reduces stress) -Consistent daily schedule (allows for adequate sleep and regular meals--missing meals has been thought to contribute to the onset of some headaches) -Relaxation techniques (reduces stress) -Use good posture techniques (decreases tension in muscles)</p> <p>Medication: Only a doctor can help decided what is best for each person based off of symptoms, frequency and duration</p>

If you ever have an abrupt, severe headache (like a thunderclap), a headache with fever/nausea/vomiting/stiff neck/mental confusion/seizures/numbness/speaking difficulties, headache after a head injury, sudden/severe headache unlike any other or a headache that worsens over days/changes in pattern, then you need to go to the emergency room.

All of these are signs that something is seriously wrong, like stroke, meningitis, encephalitis or brain tumor, and need prompt medical treatment.

Do not drive yourself, instead call 911!

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