

# Migraines and Tension Headaches

## **Tension Headaches**

Tension headaches are usually caused by the muscles in your head tightening. This can be due to poor posture, repetitive neck movement or strain, stress, or dehydration. Many times the cause of the muscle tension is unknown.

### **Symptoms of Tension Headaches**

- Constant dull, achy feeling on both sides of the head
- Tight feeling in the head or neck muscles
- Begins slowly and gradually
- Often starts in the middle of the day

### **Relieving Tension Headaches**

- Drink water -- dehydration can often cause headaches
- Put a heat pack or an ice pack on your head or neck
- Take a hot shower or relax in a comfortable position
- Talk to your health care provider about the best medicine to take for your headache

## **Migraine Headaches**

Migraine is a condition that includes headaches and can also include changes in vision (seeing flashing lights, zigzag lines, or blind spots), feeling numbness or tingling, changes in senses (sense of smell, taste, or touch), or a general "fuzzy" feeling.

### **Symptoms of Migraine Headaches**

- Intense throbbing or pounding on one side or both sides of the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Changes in how you see, including blurred vision, flashing lights, or blind spots
- Being bothered by light, noise, or odors
- Feeling tired, confused, or light headed
- Feeling cold or sweaty
- Changes in your sense of smell, taste, or touch

### **Relieving Migraine Headaches**

- Lie down in a dark, quiet room
- Put a cold compress or rag over your forehead
- Massage your scalp and temples gently
- Talk to your health care provider about medications you can use

## Prevention

- Try to avoid foods or other things that seem to cause headaches for you
- Get plenty of sleep
- Try to relax and reduce the stress in your life
- Take time away from things that are stressful
- Get regular exercise
- Talk to your health care provider about medication

## When to Call Your Doctor

- Your headaches become more frequent or get worse
- Your migraine is different than the migraines you usually experience
- Your migraine lasts for 2 or more days
- You have lost weight without trying
- You have weakness or paralysis that lasts after the headache
- The headache is brought on by coughing, sneezing, or straining while on the toilet.

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