

MEDICATIONS



Be careful when taking non-prescription pain relievers. Be sure to follow the instructions on the package.

Medications don't cure headaches and can lose their effectiveness over time. They should not be used as a substitute for recognizing and dealing with the factors that are causing your headaches.

If non-prescription drugs aren't enough to manage your headaches, your doctor may prescribe stronger medication depending on the severity of your situation. Make an appointment with your doctor for further information.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

- Acupuncture - Researchers have found that acupuncture can provide relief from chronic headache pain. This treatment involves using extremely thin, disposable needles that cause little discomfort.
- Massage- This is a wonderful way to reduce stress and relieve tension. It can help relieve tight muscles in the back of your head, neck and shoulders.
- Essential Oils - Some studies have shown that ginger, peppermint and wintergreen oils may help relieve tension-type headaches. Try rubbing the oils on your neck and temples.

CU Healthy

HCS wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website (carleton.ca/health)
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or cu_healthy@carleton.ca.



2600 CTTC Building
613-520-6674
carleton.ca/health

Headaches



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TYPES

The three most common types of headaches are:

1. Tension-type headaches - Over 90% of headaches belong in this category. Symptoms include:

- mild to moderate pain over the top of your head that may produce a feeling of pressure, as if a band is tied around your head
- pain in the back of your neck and skull

2. Migraines - In addition to severe head pain, migraines can cause nausea, vomiting and extreme sensitivity to light and sound.

Symptoms include:

- pain only on one side of the head

- pulsating or throbbing pain
- pain worsens with physical activity

3. Cluster Headaches - These usually occur repeatedly on one side of your head and cause intense pain that feels like a stabbing sensation in your eye. Symptoms include:

- bloodshot or teary eye
- blocked or runny nostril
- reduced pupil size
- swollen eyelid
- flushed face and excessive sweating

CAUSES

There are still many things about headaches that doctors don't understand. But researchers now believe changes in serotonin and endorphin levels may play a role in causing them. Serotonin is a brain chemical that regulates pain messages. Endorphins are a natural painkiller produced by the brain and spinal cord.

Doctors don't know for sure what causes changes in these brain chemicals, but poor posture, awkward working positions, stress, depression and anxiety may all be factors.

TREATMENT

If you suffer from cluster headaches or persistent migraines, you should see your doctor for further advice. Tension-type headaches are quite common and can usually be treated without seeing the doctor. Here are some tips to help you manage the pain:

- **Heat or ice packs** - Hold an ice pack to your forehead. Wrap the pack in cloth to protect your skin. Use a heating pad set on low or a hot towel to relax tense neck and shoulder muscles
- **Hot bath or shower** - This helps to relax muscle tension
- **A stress break** - Take yourself away from the situation that may be causing your headache
- **Sleep** - Be sure to get adequate rest
- **Exercise** - Regular aerobic exercise such as walking, swimming or biking, can help reduce the frequency and intensity of your headaches

