

Headache

Concussion/mild traumatic brain injury

Headache and Brain Injury

Headache is a common symptom following a concussion/mild traumatic brain injury, particularly in the early days of recovery. For most people headaches will resolve after a few days or weeks. Headaches can last for a longer period of time for some people. If you are experiencing severe, persistent headaches in the first few days that are not helped by simple pain medication see your doctor or attend the local hospital.

Post traumatic headaches can vary in how they are experienced - some people will describe these as a migraine, others as a tension type headache. Remember that for most people these will resolve over a few days to weeks.

Other Causes of Headache

Headaches may be caused by other factors such as fatigue, whiplash, pain, light sensitivity and stress. It is helpful to keep a headache diary so you can discuss your concerns with your local doctor.

An example of a headache diary log is on the next page.



Managing Headaches

When you feel a headache beginning do not ignore the symptoms. This might be the time to take medication, Panadol or Ibuprofen, or other medication prescribed by your doctor.

Here are some suggestions for managing headaches without medication:

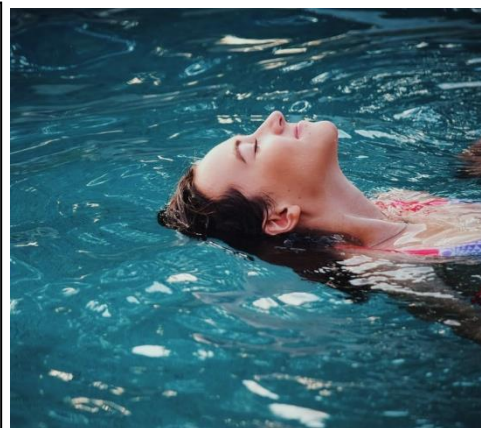
- Apply a cold or warm pack to your forehead or back of your neck
- Lie down in a quiet, dark room
- Massage or gentle stretching of shoulders, head and neck areas
- Try breathing exercises (www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-relief-breathing-techniques)
- Go for a walk outside in the fresh air
- Try mindfulness exercises (www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises)
- Drink enough water
- Reduce screen time
- Avoid alcohol.

Common Triggers

- Poor posture
- Neck pain
- Bright lights
- Too much screen time
- Feeling tired
- Feeling frustrated or stressed
- Overstimulation - for example busy shopping centres
- Sustained loud noises
- Dizziness or vision changes.

Preventing Headaches

- Getting enough sleep: this includes having a good sleep routine that ensures you get up and go to sleep at the same times each day and night
- Eating regular meals, stay hydrated and limit caffeine
- Get regular exercise, start gradually and build up
- Reduce stress – try activities that will help you manage stress such as gentle exercise, or mindfulness exercises.



Headache Diary

Here are some suggestions of information to record to keep a track of headache symptoms. Take this along to your doctor to help you develop a plan to manage your headaches.

Date	Time	Intensity of headache 1(mild) -10 (severe)	Triggers	Medication (dose)/ Action	Outcome/relief
e.g. XXXX	4.00 pm	5	Using the computer	Panadol/ lie down	Headache reduced

Should you be experiencing severe, persistent headaches that are not relieved by simple pain medication see your usual doctor or attend the local hospital.

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