

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR HEADACHE: WHAT IT MEANS AND WHEN TO SEEK HELP

## Headaches Happen. Learn to Tell What Yours Means

Almost everyone experiences Headaches at some point. While most are harmless and can be managed at home, some may be a sign of something more serious.

Understanding what type of Headache you have, how to prevent them, and when to get medical help can make all the difference.

Not every Headache is the same; identifying the cause can help you find the right relief.

## Common Types of Headaches

### Tension Headache

- The most common type
- Feels like a tight band or pressure around your head
- Often caused by stress, dehydration, or long hours at a screen
- Usually mild to moderate, not worsened by movement



Tension Headache

### Migraine

- Throbbing or pulsating pain, often on one side
- May cause nausea, vomiting, or sensitivity to light and sound
- Can last from a few hours to several days
- May have warning signs (auras), such as flashing lights or blurred vision



Migraine

### Sinus Headache

- Pain or pressure in the face, forehead, or around the eyes
- Often worse when bending forward
- May come with nasal congestion or infection symptoms



Sinus Headache

### Cluster Headache

- Intense, burning pain around one eye or temple
- Comes in short bursts ('clusters') over days or weeks
- More common in men and may occur at the same time each day



Cluster Headache

## Prevention Tips: How to Reduce Headaches

### • Stay Hydrated

Dehydration is a common trigger. Aim for 6–8 glasses of water daily.

### • Manage Stress

Relaxation techniques like deep breathing, yoga, or short breaks during work can help prevent tension Headaches.

- **Watch Your Screen Time**

Take regular breaks, adjust lighting, and keep your posture upright to reduce eye strain.

- **Eat Regularly and Sleep Well**

Skipping meals and irregular sleep can trigger both migraines and tension headaches.

- **Limit Caffeine and Alcohol**

Both can cause Headaches or make them worse in some people.

- **Keep a Headache Diary**

Track triggers, symptoms, and timing. This helps your doctor identify patterns and suggest treatments.

## **When to Seek Medical or Emergency Care**

Most Headaches improve with rest, hydration, and over-the-counter medication.

However, seek urgent medical attention if you experience:

- A sudden, severe ('thunderclap') Headache that feels like the worst pain of your life
- Headache after a head injury or fall
- Headache with blurred vision, confusion, slurred speech, or weakness on one side
- Headache with fever, stiff neck, rash, or vomiting
- Headaches that wake you from sleep or worsen over time
- Headaches that occur daily or are interfering with normal activities.

If you are unsure, contact your GP or visit the Emergency Department for assessment.

## **Managing Headaches Safely at Home**

- Rest in a quiet, dark room.
- Use a cool or warm compress on your forehead or neck.
- Stay hydrated and do not skip meals.
- Take over-the-counter pain relievers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Ensure you follow the directions on the label.
- Avoid overuse. Taking pain relievers too often can cause rebound Headaches.

## **FAQs**

These are some common questions about Headaches.

### **Q: When should I see a doctor about frequent Headaches?**

**A:** See a doctor if you have Headaches more than 10–15 days per month, or if they are affecting your daily life.

### **Q: Can Headaches be caused by vision problems?**

**A:** Yes — eye strain or incorrect prescriptions can trigger Headaches. Regular eye tests are important.

### **Q: Are Headaches normal during stress or dehydration?**

**A:** Yes, both can trigger tension Headaches. Addressing these causes often reduces the pain.