



Self-care Information

Headaches & Migraines

Tips on how you can self manage your headaches & migraines

”Supporting you to look after you”

Key advice:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Relaxation can help with stress or tension headaches.
- Avoid things that might trigger your headaches, such as certain foods.
- Keep a headache diary—this can help identify any triggers or patterns to your headaches, and can help doctors to treat them.
- Take pain killers if needed, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- Your local pharmacy can advise on the best type of medication for you and your symptoms .

What is the difference between a headache and a migraine?

Headaches are usually the tension-type, that we think of as ‘everyday or ‘ordinary’ headaches.

The pain tends to be mild to moderate, and can affect both sides of the head. It can often be described as a ‘pressing’ or ‘tightening’ feeling, and are not made worse by ordinary daily activities.

Migraines are a more moderate to severe headache. They can affect one or both sides of the head, and can also be made worse by ordinary daily activities.

You may experience other symptoms just before a migraine, such as feeling very tired, a stiff neck or changes in your mood. You may experience sickness during a migraine episode.

You may also experience other symptoms called migraine auras. These can occur before or during a migraine episode. Aura symptoms should not last longer than an hour.

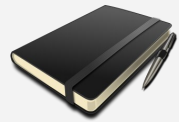
Symptoms can include:

- Problems with your sight, like seeing flashing lights.
- Numbness or tingling like pins and needles.
- Feeling dizzy.
- Difficulty speaking.

How can I treat or avoid headaches or migraines?

You could try

- ✓ Keeping a headache diary. This could help identify triggers.
- ✓ Avoiding things you know trigger your migraines, such as certain foods.
- ✓ Drinking plenty of fluids.
- ✓ Using relaxation methods if stress is a trigger.
- ✓ Eating regular meals.
- ✓ Getting the right amount of sleep.
- ✓ Taking Paracetamol or Ibuprofen if needed.
- ✓ Speaking to your local pharmacist, they can advise you on other suitable medicines you might be able to take.



Did you know?

You can buy cheaper non-branded alternatives of migraine treatments from a pharmacy or local supermarket.



Let your pharmacist know if you take any other medicines, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this may affect which treatments you can use safely.

Try not to

- ✗ Take pain killers too often, as taking them for more than 10 to 15 days per month can cause more headaches.
- ✗ Drink too much caffeine or alcohol.
- ✗ Do activities that could strain your eyes, such as looking at a screen for a long time.



See your GP or call 111 if:

- You have a headache that keeps coming back.
- Your headache gets worse, and painkillers have not helped.
- You feel sick, vomit, or find light or noise painful.
- You have a bad throbbing pain at the front or side of your head.
- Your migraines are getting worse, more frequent or lasting longer than normal.
- Your migraine has lasted longer than 72 hours.
- Your aura symptoms last longer than an hour.
- You have a migraine and are pregnant or just had a baby.
- You have a migraine more than once a week.

You or your child have a severe headache and:

- Have pain in your jaw when eating.
- Have a sore scalp.
- Have blurred or double vision.
- Have weakness or numbness in the arms or legs.

Your child is under 12 and has:

- A headache that wakes them up at night.
- A headache when they wake in the morning.
- A headache that is getting worse.
- A headache that is made worse by sneezing, coughing or bending down.
- A headache with a squint, or they are unable to look upwards.

Call 999 or go to A&E if you or your child:

- Have a head injury.
- Have a very painful headache that has come on suddenly.
- Have sudden problems speaking or remembering things.
- Have a loss of vision, or have blurred or double vision.
- Feel confused or drowsy.
- Have a very high temperature, with symptoms of meningitis. Please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/symptoms/> for a full list of symptoms.
- Have redness in the white part of the eye.
- Have a seizure or fit.
- Are unable to move, or have weakness in the arms, legs or face on one side of the body.

Your child is under 12 and has:

- A headache with drowsiness or lack of energy.
- A headache that has started within 5 days of a head injury.
- A headache with problems, swallowing, walking or speaking.

Here are some useful links to further information

NHS Website	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/headaches/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/migraine/
Patient Websites	https://patient.info/brain-nerves/headache-leaflet https://migrainetrust.org/live-with-migraine/self-management/keeping-a-migraine-diary/#page-section-2
Or visit your local pharmacy for advice	

