

Reducing Headaches

Tips for parents and children



**Prevention is the best way
to reduce headaches.
Here are some simple tips
that can help
reduce headaches**

**Prevention:
Prevent factors that can cause
or aggravate a headache**



Sleep

- Lack of sleep can trigger headaches.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule.
- Follow the same routine as much as possible on weekends.
- Avoid screens at least 1 hour before bedtime and keep them out of the bedroom .



Hydration

- Avoid caffeine (energy drinks, cola, coffee/tea, etc.). Stopping its daily consumption can also cause a headache.
- Drink water instead of drinks with colouring or added sugar.
- Avoid alcohol.



Food

- Eat at regular hours and avoid skipping meals.
- For some people, certain foods can trigger migraines, such as chocolate, cheese, smoked meat or fish, foods with preservatives (sausage, ham, beef jerky, sandwich meats, etc.), soy sauce, chips, prepared foods (frozen meals), fruits (citrus fruits, bananas, avocados).



Sports

- Get moving!
- Get some exercise every day.
- Work out as a family!



Relaxation

- Anxiety and mood disorders can make headaches worse.
- Do relaxing activities before bedtime and avoid bright screens.
- Some relaxation techniques can be taught.



Keep a diary

- To better assess triggers, you can keep a diary of symptoms, activities, sleep patterns and eating habits.
- Record episodes of infections because they are also triggers.
- Show this diary to your doctor.



Medication

- Some medications can trigger headaches. To find out if this is the case with your medications, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you have migraine with aura (headache often preceded by flashes of light), certain medications should be avoided. Before starting birth control pills, it is important to tell your health care provider about your headaches.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD HAS A HEADACHE



Rest

Put your child to bed in a quiet, dark and cool place to recuperate and rest.



Relaxation

Use relaxation techniques, such as soft music (if the noise doesn't bother them) to distract your child and to help them relax.



Analgesics

When a headache starts, you may administer:

- Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol® or Tempra®) every 4 to 6 hours as needed

AND/OR

- Ibuprofen (such as Advil®, Motrin®, etc.) every 6 to 8 hours as needed, or Naproxen® every 8 to 12 hours, as recommended by your doctor
- Be aware of the maximum daily doses and of contraindications
- Avoid frequent use, which can increase headaches: these drugs should be taken fewer than 15 days a month

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You will need to come back to the Emergency Department if your child presents with one or more of the following symptoms:

- Pain that returns or persists and is not relieved by acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen;
- Headache that wakes up your child at night;
- Presence of fever accompanied by a severe headache or neck pain;
- Deterioration in your child's general condition, such as feeling lethargic, drowsy or unwell;
- Neurological symptoms (such as balance problems, vision problems, drowsiness, known but prolonged aura (e.g. seeing flashing lights for more than an hour), etc.);
- Uncontrolled leg and/or body movements, restlessness, spasms;
- Repeated vomiting;
- Dehydration (e.g. decreased urine, tears, or dry mouth).

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