

Q. How can I make my headaches go away?

A. Headaches can stop you in your tracks, cause you to miss work, and limit your ability to do things you enjoy. But in a way, a headache can be a warning sign. In some cases, an intense headache is a symptom of a more serious medical condition.

Migraine headaches cause severe pain and can last for more than a day. These can be especially hard to deal with. If you have this type of headache, see your doctor. You might need a prescription to help you.

Fortunately, most headaches are related to stress, depression, or anxiety. They can also be caused by holding your head or neck in a position that creates tension. Here are some simple things you can do to reduce the number of headaches you get, and lessen their intensity.

Rest and Relaxation

Make time to rest and relax. Listen to soothing music, meditate, take a walk, or turn out the lights and take a nap. Finding ways to reduce stress and tension will help you treat the symptoms of your headache. Getting adequate rest can also help. Try to get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night. And follow a regular bedtime schedule.

Drink Water

Drink more water. Researchers recently found a link between headaches and dehydration. When you are not well-hydrated, the flow of blood and oxygen to your brain is compromised. And this can cause a headache. Try to drink 6 eight-ounce glasses of water a day. And avoid caffeine, which actually contributes to dehydration.

Exercise

Regular aerobic exercise such as brisk walking, swimming, and bicycling, can help you handle stress better and avoid headaches. In a recent study, people who regularly suffered

Help For Your



Headache

from headaches decreased their symptoms and frequency of headaches by cycling at least 30 minutes a day. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins, or natural pain relievers. A little exercise will improve blood flow and help release tension that can cause a headache.

Improve Your Environment

Poor posture and environmental factors are major causes of headaches. Several recent studies have found that poor posture can create tension in your neck and shoulders that can trigger a headache. Sit up straight. Adjust your office chair and the position of your keyboard and computer screen. And get an eye exam to see if you need glasses. Poor vision also contributes to headaches. So does inadequate or excessive lighting.

Keep a Headache Diary

If you suffer from frequent headaches, keep a diary of when you experience them. Write down the date and time your headache starts. Note the type of headache pain you have and its location. Include any details about the circumstances to help you identify your headache triggers. (A trigger is an activity, substance, or situation. For example, stress, foods, lack of sleep, skipping meals, taking pain relievers, and exposure to heat, cold, and wind.) You and your doctor can use this information to find your headache triggers, and develop a plan to avoid them.

Sources:

American Council for Headache Education

National Headache Foundation

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

European Journal of Neurology

Journal of Head and Face Pain

