



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS HEADACHE



WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON HEADACHES?

Headache in the general population is estimated at about 50%. (WHO, 2016)

Most common type of headaches are tension-type headache (60%) and migraine (40-50%) in the overall headache burden. (Medlink, Jan. 25, 2020) The prevalence of migraine in children and adolescents is 7.7%. (IASP, 2012)

- Migraine is a recurrent headache, unilateral in location, pulsating in quality, moderate to severe in intensity, aggravated by routine activity, and associated with nausea and/or vomiting, and sensitivity to light and sound. (ICHD-3)*
- Tension-type headache is bilateral in location, pressing or tightening in quality, mild or moderate in intensity, not aggravated by routine physical activity. (ICHD-3)*

(*International Classification of Headache Disorders, 3rd ed.)

WHAT ARE THE TRIGGERS OF HEADACHES?



- Alcohol (wine, beer)
- Caffeine overuse/withdrawal
- Chocolate
- Aspartame
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- Fruits (citrus fruits, bananas, avocado)
- Nuts (peanuts, soy nuts and soy sauce)
- Dairy (aged cheese)
- Meat (bacon, sausage, luncheon meat, deli meat, pepperoni, smoked and cured meats)
- Pickled food
- Lack of sleep/oversleep
- Fatigue
- Stress
- Hormonal balance
- Oral contraceptives
- Elevated blood pressure
- Prolonged exposure to TV, cellphones and other electronic gadgets

(Source: Migraine Headache Treatment and Management, Medscape 2020)



WHEN DO I WORRY ABOUT MY HEADACHE?

- New headache >50 years old
- First worst headache of your life
- Headache that worsens through time (becoming more frequent and more intense)
- Headache with fever, seizures/convulsions or generalized weakness
- Headache worsened when lying down, bending, straining or coughing

(Dodick 2017)

WHAT IS THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMON HEADACHES?



Migraine can be managed through acute treatment and preventive medications.

- For acute migraine attacks, patients are prescribed non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, acetaminophen, nonopioid analgesics, triptans
- If migraine attacks occur more than 4x/month, your doctor may prescribe preventive medications like antiepileptic drugs, beta-blockers, calcium blockers.

Please consult your doctor for medications which are appropriate for you. For severe attacks, you might have to be brought to the ER for further evaluation and management.

(Medscape 2019)



ARE HEADACHES A SYMPTOM OF COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 are non-specific, and the disease presentation may include fever (87.9%), dry cough (67.7%), fatigue (38.1%), shortness of breath (18.6%), sore throat (13.9%), and headache (13.6%). Most people infected with COVID-19 have mild disease and recover.

(Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2020)