

## Migraine & Headache Information

A tension headache is a mild to moderate pain, tightness or pressure around your forehead or the back of your head and neck. Some people say it feels like a clamp or tight band around the head.

They are very common – almost everyone will have a tension headache at some point.

### What are the symptoms of a headache?

The pain caused by a tension headache is often dull and persistent. It frequently starts at the back of the head or temples, then spreads, becoming like a band around the head. It may feel like pressure or tightness.

### What triggers a tension headache?

Tension headaches, despite the name, are not always caused by stress and mental tension. There can be other triggers, including excessive muscle contraction such as frowning and jaw clenching.

Other trigger for headaches includes:

- Stress, tiredness, and anxiety
- Depression or being upset
- Poor posture at work, home or when driving
- Bright, noisy environments
- Long periods of reading
- Too much smoking or coffee
- Overuse of pain-relief medicines, including headache tablets.

### When should you consult a Doctor?

Headaches are common and most people will experience at least one in their lifetime. They are usually mild, but you should see your doctor if your headaches occur frequently and they prevent you from doing the things you can normally do. You should also go to see you doctor if you frequently take pain medicine for headaches.

### What to do at Onset of Migraine / Headache

- Turn of lights and close blinds/ find a dark space to lay down.
- Lay on your side with a pillow making sure your chin is tucked slightly to relieve tension on neck muscles.
- Have a cold beverage to drink.

## Some Over the Counter Medications

*NOTE: Please consult a Medical Doctor and follow all instructions from the Chemist when using medication. If problems persist, please consult your GP.*

- Nurofen (take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours)
- Panadol (take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours)
- Anagrain available behind the counter when asked, will have to speak to a pharmacist (take 1 tablet as directed)
- If dehydrated get Hydralyte in drink or dissolving tablet form

## Exercise / Stretches

Help to relieve stress in the upper neck causing tension. Keep stretching and exercising regularly to reduce symptoms of migraines.

- Side neck bend; Start in a seated or standing position. Keep your spine neutral, relax shoulders, and rest arms alongside your body. Lower right ear toward right shoulder. Extend left hand toward floor, then flex fingers upward. Hold for 30 seconds. Return to starting position. Repeat on the other side.
- Child Pose; Kneel on floor. Spread knees outward to the width of the mat. Keep big toes touching and rest buttocks on heels. Lengthen spine and place hands on thighs. Lower torso between thighs, reaching hands toward the top of your mat. Place your forehead on the mat and relax your neck, shoulders, and arms. Hold for 30 seconds. Another option is to rest arms alongside the body, with hands under buttocks and palms facing upward.
- Walking: Take a 15-minute walk in nature or quiet suburb to relax and release “feel good” hormones into the body

## Foods To Eat and may avoid reliving migraines and headaches.

Eat	Avoid
Fresh beef, chicken, fish	Marinated meats
Homemade dips, sauces and dressings	Bottled salad dressings/sauces
Fresh white, wheat or rye breads	Onion
Pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds	Citrus fruits
Plain potato chips/unflavoured crackers	Dried fruits
Whole grain cereals	
Fresh veggies and fruits	

Not eating anything will decrease your blood sugar leading to an increase in the severity and recurrence of migraines

Common food triggers

- Aged cheeses
- Alcohol
- Chocolate
- Food preservatives (MSG, artificial sweetener and nitrates)
- smoked/cured fish

## Essential oils

All oils listed have stress reducing properties to help relieve tension and pain

- Peppermint
- Lavender
- Rosemary
- Chamomile

## Massage

- Trigger point massage; LI-4 found on the back of the hand at the base of the thumb and index finger. Hold for 2-3 minutes and repeat a few times daily.
- Massage a few drops of selected essential oils into the temples using a circular motion
- Use a cold press on the forehead with chosen essential oil.

