

bacterial infections, and brain tumors.

Severe pain is the most disturbing symptom in migraine. Tension-type headache is usually mild or moderate, often producing a pressing feeling in the temples, like a “tight band around the head.” Continuous, daily, or near-daily headache with no specific cause occurs in a small subgroup of children. In epilepsy, headaches commonly occur immediately before, during, or after a seizure attack.

Treatment of recurrent headaches requires an understanding of the antecedents and consequences of headache pain. A headache diary can allow the child to record the time of onset, activities before the onset, any worries or concerns as far back as 24 hours before the onset, severity and duration of pain, pain medications taken, and activity pattern during headache episodes. The headache diary allows ongoing monitoring of headache activity, indicates the effects of interventions, and guides treatment planning.

Headache management involves two main behavioral approaches: (1) teaching patients self-control skills to prevent headache (biofeedback techniques and relaxation training), and (2) modifying behavior patterns that increase the risk of headache occurrence or reinforce headache activity (cognitive-behavioral stress management techniques). Families may be able to identify factors that trigger the headache and avoid the triggers in the future. Biofeedback is a technology-based form of relaxation therapy and can be useful in assessing and reinforcing learning of relaxation skills, such as progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and imagery. Children as young as 7 years old are able to learn these skills and with 2 to 3 weeks of practice are able to decrease the time needed to achieve relaxation.

To modify behavior patterns that increase the risk of headache or reinforce headache activity, the nurse instructs parents to avoid giving excessive attention to their child's headache and to respond matter-of-factly to pain behavior and requests for special attention. Parents learn to assess whether the child is avoiding school or social performance demands because of headache. Parents are taught to focus attention on adaptive coping, such as the use of relaxation techniques and maintenance of normal activity patterns. When using cognitive-behavioral stress management techniques, the parents identify negative thoughts and situations that may be