

Tension Headaches



Tension headaches cause a dull, steady pain on both sides of the head. You also feel the pain in the neck and the back of the head. Your eyes may also feel tired. Tension headaches can be triggered by many things. These include:

- Muscle tension and clenching
- Lack of sleep
- Bad posture
- Eyestrain
- Stress
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Arthritis of the neck



To help prevent tension headaches

Take these steps:

- Make sure your work area is set up to help you prevent neck strain and eyestrain.
- Make sure that your eyeglass prescription is current and is correct for the work you do.

- Learn ways to relax and reduce emotional stress. These include deep breathing, progressive relaxation, yoga, meditation, and biofeedback.
- Keep up a regular exercise program. Work with your healthcare provider on this. Exercise can help keep your neck and back flexible, strong, and relaxed.

To relieve the pain

Take these steps:

- Use moist heat to relax the muscles. Soak in a hot bath or wrap a warm, moist towel around your neck.
- Brush your scalp lightly with a soft hairbrush.
- Give yourself a massage. Knead the muscles that go from your shoulders up the back of your skull.
- Use an ice pack. Wrap the ice pack in a thin cloth or towel and apply it directly to the place where you feel pain.
- Rest. Sleep often helps ease headache pain.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydration is a trigger for headaches. Don't drink alcohol. This will make dehydration worse.
- Use pain medicine when needed for moderate to severe pain. Don't use the pain medicine more than twice a week. This helps prevent overuse headaches caused by medicine overuse.

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