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Headaches in children: Symptom Checker

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**Title**

Headaches

**Feature Title**

Headaches

**List Title**

Headaches

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**MCV Related tag(s)**

**Primary Location**

Symptom Checker

**Tease**

Headaches are common and usually aren't the result of serious illness. Identify possible common causes based on your child's symptoms.

**Abstract**

Find possible causes of headaches in children. See our Symptom Checker.

**Benefit Summary**

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**Gender**

**Age**

Child

**ENTER IN FARCRY:**

**When to get medical help** (1)

Get emergency medical care if your child's headache:

Is sudden and severe or the "worst headache ever"

Is accompanied by a fever, nausea or vomiting not related to a known illness

Is accompanied by stiff neck, rash, confusion, seizures, double vision, weakness, numbness or difficulty speaking

Follows a head injury, fall or bump

Get prompt medical care if your child's headache:

Gets worse despite rest and over-the-counter pain medication

**Self-care strategies** (1)

For occasional tension headaches, the following self-care strategies may provide relief for your child:

Allow your child to rest.

Place a warm pack on your child's neck.

Place a cool rag or ice pack on your child's forehead.

Gently massage or exercise your child's neck muscles.

Give your child an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, others) or acetaminophen (Tylenol, others). Use only as directed on the label, and don't give your child combinations of pain relievers.

If your child has recurrent headaches, take these steps:

Keep a headache diary.

Help your child avoid known triggers and watch for potential triggers.

Encourage your child to get enough sleep and regular exercise.

For migraines, take action quickly. At the first sign of a migraine, follow these steps:

Give your child an over-the-counter pain reliever, or if your child has a prescription pain reliever, give it as directed by your doctor.

Let your child rest in a dark room.

Place a cool rag or ice pack on your child's forehead.

Give your child a small amount of a caffeinated beverage.

**More Information**

Headaches in children DS01132

**END OF FARCRY TEXT**

Find possible causes of headaches based on specific factors. Check one or more factors on this page that apply to your child's symptom.

**Pain is**

Extreme

Mild to moderate

Moderate to severe

Pressure or squeezing sensation

Stabbing or burning

Throbbing

**Pain located**

Around one eye or radiates from one eye

Behind eyes or radiates from eyes

On both sides of head

On one side of head

**Onset**

Is gradual

Is preceded by head injury or fall

Is preceded by visual or other sensory disturbances

Is sudden

**Duration of headache is**

Several hours to several days

Several minutes to a few hours

**Recurrence of headache**

Gradually becomes more frequent

Is daily

Is often in the morning

Is often the same time every day

**Triggered or worsened by**

Change in sleep patterns

Clenching or grinding teeth

Everyday activities

Hormonal changes

Poor posture

Stress

**Relieved by**

Lying down in the dark

Over-the-counter pain medication

Rest

**Accompanied by**

Achy joints or muscles

Change in personality, behaviors or mental status

Confusion

Difficulty speaking

Dizziness

Fever

Jaw pain

Memory loss or forgetfulness

Nausea or vomiting

Persistent weakness

Restlessness or agitation

Ringing in ears

Runny or stuffy nose

Seizures

Sensitivity to light or noise

Stiff neck

Vision problems

Weakness on one side of body

**Possible causes**

These diseases and conditions match at least one of the factors you selected. Those with the most matches are listed first.

DS00281 Brain tumor (2, p. 3; 3, p. 225; 4; 17)

Pain is moderate to severe

Onset is gradual

Recurrence of headache gradually becomes more frequent

Recurrence of headache is often in the morning

Accompanied by change in personality, behaviors or mental status

Accompanied by confusion

Accompanied by difficulty speaking

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

Accompanied by persistent weakness

Accompanied by vision problems

DS00487 Cluster headache (2, p. 2; 3, p. 230; 5, p. 196; 6)

Pain is extreme

Pain is stabbing or burning

Pain located around one eye or radiates from one eye

Onset is sudden

Duration of headache is several minutes to a few hours

Recurrence of headache is daily

Recurrence of headache is often the same time every day

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

Accompanied by restlessness or agitation

Accompanied by runny or stuffy nose

Accompanied by sensitivity to light or noise

DS00320 Concussion (7)

Pain is mild to moderate

Onset is preceded by head injury or fall

Accompanied by change in personality, behaviors or mental status

Accompanied by confusion

Accompanied by difficulty speaking

Accompanied by dizziness

Accompanied by memory loss or forgetfulness

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

DS00226 Encephalitis (2, p. 3; 8)

Pain is moderate to severe

Onset is gradual

Relieved by over-the-counter pain medication

Relieved by rest

Accompanied by achy joints or muscles

Accompanied by change in personality, behaviors or mental status

Accompanied by confusion

Accompanied by fever

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

Accompanied by persistent weakness

Accompanied by seizures

Accompanied by vision problems

DS00330 Intracranial hematoma (9, p. 631; 10)

Pain is moderate to severe

Onset is gradual

Onset is preceded by head injury or fall

Accompanied by confusion

Accompanied by difficulty speaking

Accompanied by dizziness

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

Accompanied by weakness on one side of body

DS00118 Meningitis (2, p. 3; 11; 17)

Pain is moderate to severe

Onset is gradual

Relieved by over-the-counter pain medication

Relieved by rest

Accompanied by change in personality, behaviors or mental status

Accompanied by confusion

Accompanied by fever

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

Accompanied by seizures

Accompanied by sensitivity to light or noise

Accompanied by stiff neck

DS00120 Migraine (2, p. 2; 12; 13; 17)

Pain is extreme

Pain is moderate to severe

Pain is throbbing

Pain located on both sides of head

Pain located on one side of head

Onset is gradual

Onset is preceded by visual or other sensory disturbances

Onset is sudden

Duration of headache is several hours to several days

Triggered or worsened by change in sleep patterns

Triggered or worsened by everyday activities

Triggered or worsened by hormonal changes

Triggered or worsened by stress

Relieved by lying down in the dark

Relieved by over-the-counter pain medication

Relieved by rest

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

Accompanied by sensitivity to light or noise

DS00851 Pseudotumor cerebri (3, p. 230; 7, p. 631; 14)

Pain is moderate to severe

Pain located behind eyes or radiates from eyes

Onset is gradual

Accompanied by dizziness

Accompanied by nausea or vomiting

Accompanied by ringing in ears

Accompanied by vision problems

DS00355 TMJ disorders (4, p. 197; 15)

Pain is moderate to severe

Pain located on both sides of head

Pain located on one side of head

Triggered or worsened by clenching or grinding teeth

Relieved by over-the-counter pain medication

Accompanied by jaw pain

DS00304 Tension headache (2, p. 2; 4, p. 194; 16)

Pain is mild to moderate

Pain is moderate to severe

Pain is pressure or squeezing sensation

Pain located on both sides of head

Triggered or worsened by poor posture

Triggered or worsened by stress

Relieved by over-the-counter pain medication

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