

Vantage Pharmacy

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Opening Times

Monday - Friday 8.30am to 7pm

Saturday, and Sunday Closed

Bank Holidays Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for February 2025

1. What is a headache?
2. What are the types of headache?
3. What are primary headaches?
4. Name 3 primary headaches?
5. What can trigger these?
6. Are primary headaches dangerous?
7. What are secondary headaches?
8. Are they dangerous?
9. What is the main cause of a headache?
10. Are headaches hereditary?



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**Do you or someone you know
suffer from headaches?
We may be able to help.**

Answers on the bottom of P2

What is a headache?

Headaches refer to pain in your head or face. The type of pain, how bad it is, where it hurts and how often you get headaches can vary from person to person. There are over 150 types of headaches, but the most common types are:

- Tension headaches - These are the most common among adults and teens. They cause mild to moderate pain and come and go over time. They usually have no other symptoms
- Migraine headaches - These are often described as pounding, throbbing pain that can last from 4 hours to 3 days. They



usually happen one to four times a month. Along with pain people have other symptoms such as sensitivity to light,

noise or smells, nausea, loss of appetite and stomach pain.

- Cluster headaches - These headaches are most severe. You can have intense burning or piercing pain behind or around one eye. The pain can be so bad that most people can't sit still and often pace during an attack
- Chronic daily headaches - you have this type of headache 15 days or more a month for longer than 3 months. Some are short. Others last more than 4 hours
- Post traumatic headaches - these usually start 2-3 days

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after a head injury. You'll feel a dull ache that gets worse from time to time, vertigo, trouble concentrating, memory problems and feel irritable. The headaches may last a few months, but if it doesn't get better within a couple of weeks, call your doctor.

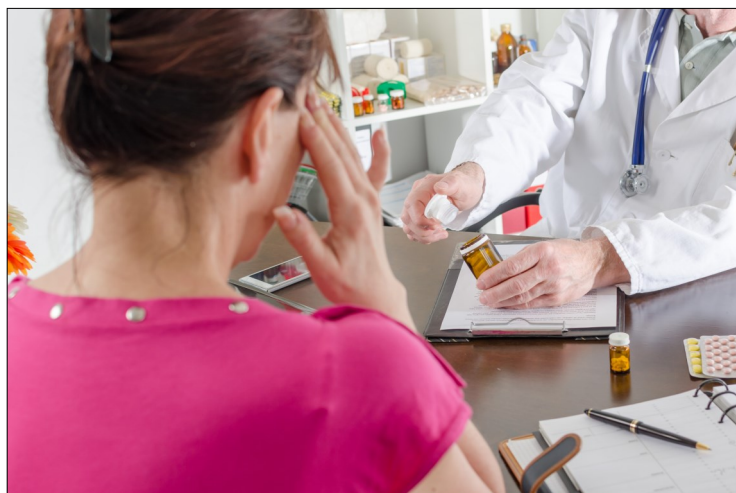
All of these are primary headaches i.e. they have no known cause and though they can be very painful they are not dangerous. Secondary headaches are caused by other medical issues. This distinction is important as some secondary headaches are caused by medical emergencies that should be treated.

What causes headaches?

The pain you feel during a headache comes from a mix of signals between your brain, blood vessels and nearby nerves. Specific nerves in your blood vessels and head muscles switch on and send signals to your brain. It isn't clear how these signals get turned on in the first place.

Common causes of headaches include:

- ♦ Illness - infections, colds and fevers
- ♦ Stress - emotional stress and depression, as well as alcohol use, skipping meals, changes in sleep pattern and taking too much medication can trigger headaches.
- ♦ Your environment - this includes second hand tobacco smoke, strong smells from household chemicals, perfumes, allergens
- ♦ Genetics - Headaches, especially migraines tend to run in families. Most children and teens (90%) who have migraines have other family members who get them. When both parents have a history of migraines, there is a 70% chance their child will also have them. If only one parent has a history of these headaches, the risk drops to 25-50%



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How are headaches treated?

Your doctor may recommend different types of treatments. They may also suggest more testing or refer you to appropriate experts, such as ear, nose and throat specialists, neurologists, physical therapists or a headache specialist.

The treatment you get will depend on a lot of things such as the type of headache you have, how often you get it and its cause. Some people don't need treatment at all but for those that do you might get:

- * Over the counter pain relieving medication like aspirin or paracetamol
- * Counselling
- * Stress management
- * Biofeedback

Addressing underlying issues such as high blood pressure and neck or jaw problems is crucial. Your doctor will make a treatment plan to meet your specific needs. Once you start a treatment programme, keep track of how well it's working. A headache diary can help you note any patterns or changes in how you feel. Know that it may take some time for you and your doctor to find the best treatment plan so try to be patient. Even though you are getting treatment, you should still stay clear of things you know can trigger your headaches such as foods and smells. It is also important to stick to healthy habits that will help you feeling good such as regular exercise, enough sleep and a healthy diet.

For more information on this or any other health related problem you might have, talk to one of our trained team.

Answers: Q1, A pain in your head or face often described as a pressure that is throbbing, constant, sharp or dull. Q2, There are more than 150 types of headache. Q3, They're not a symptom of or caused by an underlying condition. Q4, Tension-type, migraine, cluster, chronic daily headaches. Q5, Alcohol (particularly red wine), certain foods, nicotine, changes in sleep, poor posture, exercise, skipped meals, cough. Q6, No but they can be very painful. Q7, They are caused by an underlying medical condition. Q8, Not necessarily and often resolve once the underlying condition is treated. Q9, The result from signals interacting among your brain, blood vessels and surrounding nerves. Q10, They do tend to run in families, especially migraines.