

HEADACHES



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INTRODUCTION

Headaches are one of the commonest problems after a head injury or concussion and can cause a lot of distress. If you experienced headaches before your injury, you are more likely to have bad headaches after your injury. The headaches usually gradually go away one to two months after the injury.

There is no need for a brain scan if you have headaches as these scans are nearly always normal. However, if your headaches are increasing in frequency and getting worse see your GP or paediatrician.

THINGS THAT MAY WORSEN YOUR HEADACHE

1. Light and noise
2. Stress and tension
3. Emotions such as anger, sadness, and worry
4. Needing to concentrate
5. Exercise, but LACK of activity can also make your pain worse
6. Focusing on your pain



THINGS THAT CAN HELP TO MANAGE YOUR PAIN

1. Some pain medications. However after the first few weeks you should avoid taking pain medications for more than three days a week.
2. Use ice-packs or a cool cloth on your head. If you are outside, try wetting a hat under cold water and put this on your head.
3. Other kids find that a heat pack around the neck, or a warm bath or shower helps.
4. Physiotherapy, especially if your headaches occur with neck pain and dizziness.
5. Gentle neck stretches and massage.
6. Work on your mood and emotions: aim for happiness and relaxation.
7. Gradually increase your physical activity and exercise so each week you are doing more than the last.
8. Manage and plan your day, especially at school.
9. Distraction.

WAYS TO DISTRACT YOUR BRAIN FROM THE PAIN

- read a good book
- chill out on the couch and watch a good movie
- listen to some music you enjoy
- play a computer game (for short periods only) or watch a favourite TV show
- meet up with friends and talk about fun things
- meditation or yoga
- go for a walk in nature
- breathing techniques such as 'boxed breathing' (see the Mood and Feelings Information Leaflet for more information) and 'balloon breathing'



PACING YOURSELF AT SCHOOL

If you have a busy day at school coming up, try the following to minimise headaches coming on;

- make sure you keep moving, don't stay in one position for too long
- do gentle neck stretches
- make sure you have enough breaks
- add in some fun ways to relax during the day
- pay attention to your posture
- take a good quality back-pack to school, but don't make it too heavy
- do breathing exercises throughout the day
- be kind to your body by getting enough sleep, eating well, and drinking enough water

WHAT DO I DO IF I STILL HAVE HEADACHES?

Despite following all of this advice you may still have problems. Other things like physiotherapy, psychology, preventative headache medications, and the Queensland Paediatric Rehabilitation Service at the Queensland Children's Hospital may be able to help. See your GP to discuss this.