



# Headaches

Headaches are incredibly common in children (even as young as 4-5 years old). The most common causes include migraine, tension type headaches, a viral illness or upper respiratory infection, or following a minor head injury. Only a tiny minority are due to a serious cause.

In particular with migraine, it is common to have other symptoms in addition to headache. These are all expected symptoms and not inherently a cause of concern. Some of these symptoms include:

- Light sensitivity
- Sound sensitivity
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Fatigue/irritability

## **What to expect at a visit for your child's headaches:**

- Your provider will get a detailed history, including the details of your child's headaches, additional medical history, and lifestyle factors that could be impacting headaches.
- Your provider will perform a detailed neurological exam, including looking into your child's eyes.
- Your provider will discuss treatment options. Lifestyle changes are often a big part of treating headaches. Medications are not always needed but depending on headache type and frequency, both acute and preventive options will be discussed.

## **Things other than medication that can help your child's headache:**

- Drink water
- Rest in a quiet dark space
- Sleep
- Hot shower/bath
- Cool rag or ice packs on forehead, temples, back of neck
- Peppermint oil on temples

## **When to call your doctor to discuss treatment options:**

- If headaches are occurring more than a few times a month, are severe enough to interfere with daily activities, or do not consistently improve with over-the-counter medications.
- If headaches have suddenly increased in severity or frequency, are frequently causing awakening in the middle of the night, are associated with weakness of one side of the body, or have any other features that are concerning to you.

For more information, visit  
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