

Headache Management



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Headaches of any type (tension, cluster, migraine) can be very difficult to manage. Listed below are a few tips designed to minimize the frequency and level of impairment that can occur with headaches.

1) NO SKIPPING MEALS: Your body needs evenly distributed nutrition to function at a high level; skipping meals, especially breakfast, will often contribute to headaches of any type.

2) SLEEP SCHEDULE: Uneven sleep schedules (e.g. “crashing” on weekends) disrupts your body’s expected sleep cycles. Disrupted sleep cycles have long been established as a contributor to headaches. If you have trouble evening out sleep/wake times, SET THE WAKE TIME. A bonus hour of sleep is allowed on weekends/vacations – more than that can exacerbate a headache syndrome.

3) ELIMINATE TV SCREENS AN HOUR BEFORE BED: This includes TV, computers, video games, and smart phones. Reading, puzzles, games, homework, musical instruments, even reading off a Kindle or black/white screen are allowed. Read in a dimly lit room in a chair – not in the bed. Beds are for sleeping only!

4) MINIMIZE HIGHER RISK FOODS AND SUPPLEMENTS: Caffeine-containing beverages will contribute to headaches and withdrawal headaches. Exercise supplements should be used with extreme caution.

5) MEDICATION: Ibuprofen, barring allergy, is the first line of defense for a headache, BUT...it should be an appropriate dose based on the person’s weight and should be given WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF THE ONSET OF A HEADACHE to maximize its potential to abort the headache.

6) DIARY OF EVENTS: Employing the above strategies can be challenging – keep a diary of events on a calendar or like item. If headaches do not improve in the ensuing 3-4 weeks, follow up with your doctor.