

Primary Headache Types (most common)



Tension-type Headache

- The most common primary headache.
- It is usually not very severe and does not get in the way of everyday activity.
- It may be associated with neck pain and can feel like pressure or tightness, often like a band around the head.
- Episodic tension-type headache is very common.
- It usually lasts a few hours but can last for several days.
- It usually responds well to over-the-counter pain medicines.



Migraine Headache

- A headache caused by the release of chemicals in the brain and around the brain's blood vessels that cause inflammation and pain.
- Migraine may occur every week, or even more often, and can last a few hours or days.
- Some people experience migraine their whole lives.
- Pain can be moderate to severe and may feel like throbbing on one side of the head.
- In addition to the pain, nausea and sensitivity to light and sound are common.
- All of these can be worsened by physical activity during a migraine.
- Prescription medicines are available when over-the-counter pain medicines do not work.



Cluster Headache

- Cluster headache is very rare.
- It typically occurs in people over the age of 20.
- A cluster headache is typically a short but intense headache that can occur many times in one day.
- Severe pain is often felt around one eye and is accompanied by a runny or blocked nose on the side of the headache, or a droopy eyelid (even though it appears normal other times).

Secondary Headache Types (most common)

Posttraumatic Headache

It usually occurs following a hit to the head and or body. It typically develops immediately after the injury or within the next week. This type of headache is very common in Veterans and active duty Service members.

It can be one of the most common complaints after a mild traumatic brain injury. Posttraumatic headache can feel like a migraine or a tension-type headache.

Cervicogenic Headache

It is a type of headache that is associated with neck pain (with or without an injury) or related to strain on the neck muscles over time. The headache is often a dull ache that starts with neck pain in and around the back of the head.

Drug Induced Headache

- It occurs when either a single medicine or a mixture of medicines is used enough to cause headache symptoms.
- It can be a daily headache and is often the worst after waking up.
- Symptoms include nausea, restlessness, problems with concentration and memory, and irritability.
- Medicine use may improve the current headache, but frequent or daily use of medicines will lead to worse and more frequent headaches. Unless the amount of medicine is decreased, the cycle will continue.
- If you are taking pain medicines more than two days per week and have many headaches, discuss this with your healthcare provider.
- You should work with your provider to figure out if the medicine(s) you are taking cause your headache.
- Talk with your provider to see if you have other things that increase your risk of developing medication overuse headache.

