

Headache - Migraine

Definition

- Migraine headaches are the most painful type of recurrent headache. During a migraine, most people can't do anything except lie down.
- Your child has been diagnosed in the past as having previous migraines

Health Information

Symptoms

- Severe, very painful headaches. The pain is usually described as throbbing or pounding.
- Pain usually only on one side of the head.
- The pain is very severe and keeps your child from doing any normal activities.
- Lights and sound make them worse. Most children want to lie down in a dark, quiet room.
- Vomiting or nausea is present in 80%.

Cause

- Migraines run in families (genetic).
- Also called vascular headaches because of changes in the blood vessels.

Pain Scale

- **Mild:** Your child feels pain and tells you about it. But, the pain does not keep your child from any normal activities. School, play and sleep are not changed.
- **Moderate:** The pain keeps your child from doing some normal activities. It may wake him or her up from sleep.
- **Severe:** The pain is very bad. It keeps your child from doing all normal activities.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- The sooner a migraine headache is treated, the more likely the treatment will work.
- Often the most helpful treatment is drinking water and going to sleep.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Migraine Medicine:

- If your child's doctor has prescribed a medicine for migraines, use it as directed.
- Give it as soon as the migraine starts.
- If not, ibuprofen is the best over-the-counter med for migraines. Give ibuprofen now.
- Repeat ibuprofen in 6 hours if needed.

3. Cold Pack:

- Put a cold pack on the spot that hurts the most. You can also use a cold wet washcloth.
- Do this for 20 minutes.

4. Fluids:

- Drink lots of fluids as soon as you think a migraine is coming on.
- Water works fastest.
- Reason: Being dehydrated is the most common trigger for a migraine attack.

5. **Sleep:**
 - Have your child lie down in a dark, quiet place.
 - Try to fall asleep.
 - People with a migraine often wake up from sleep with their migraine gone.
6. **Prevention of Migraine Attacks:**
 - Drink lots of fluids. Reason: Getting dehydrated is the most common trigger for migraines.
 - Don't skip meals.
 - Get enough sleep each night.
7. **What to Expect:**
 - With treatment, migraine headaches usually go away in 2 to 6 hours.
 - Most people with migraines get 3 or 4 attacks per year.
8. **Return to School:**
 - Children with a true migraine headache are not able to stay in school.
 - Children with migraine headaches also commonly get muscle tension headaches. For those, they should take a pain medicine and go to school. Learn to tell them apart.

Call Your Doctor If

- Headache becomes much worse than past migraines
- Headache lasts longer than past migraines
- You think your child needs to be seen

Pediatric Care Advice

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