

What do you know about headaches?

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June is Migraine and Headache Awareness Month, which makes this a good time to learn more about headaches.

Headache is pain in any region of the head. Headaches may occur on one or both sides of the head, be isolated to a certain location, radiate across

the head from one point, or have a viselike quality. A headache may appear as a sharp pain, a throbbing sensation or a dull ache. Headaches can develop gradually or suddenly, and may last from less than an hour to several days.

Headaches are generally classified by cause.

Primary headaches

A primary headache is caused by overactivity of or problems with pain-sensitive structures in your head. A primary headache isn't a symptom of an underlying disease.

The most common primary headaches are:

- Cluster headache
- Migraine
- Migraine with aura
- Tension headache

Secondary headaches

A secondary headache is a symptom of a disease that can activate the pain-sensitive nerves of the head. Any number of conditions—varying greatly in severity—can cause secondary headaches.

Some types of secondary headaches include:

- Medication overuse headaches
- Sinus headaches
- Spinal headaches
- Thunderclap headaches

When to seek emergency care

Your headache symptoms can help your health care team determine the cause and appropriate treatment. Most [headaches](#) aren't the result of a serious illness, but some may result from a life-threatening condition requiring [emergency care](#).

Seek emergency care if you're experiencing the worst headache of your life; a sudden, severe headache; or a headache accompanied by:

- Confusion or trouble understanding speech
- Fainting
- High fever, greater than 102 to 104 F
- Numbness, weakness or paralysis on one side of your body
- Stiff neck
- Trouble seeing, speaking or walking
- Nausea or vomiting, if not clearly related to the flu or a hangover.

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