

# HEADACHE

**HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?** 24 Hours

**HOW SERIOUS IS IT?** Mild

**CAN I STILL WORK?** Usually

## WHAT IS IT?

Tension headaches affect both sides of the head. It usually feels 'pressing' or 'tightening' and is not affected by routine daily activities.



Migraine symptoms can vary between individuals but very often it is accompanied by a throbbing headache affecting one or both sides of the head and made worse by ordinary daily activities.

## HOW DO I TREAT IT?

- Keep a headache diary and record how often you get headaches, how long they last, and whether they are mild, moderate or severe.
- Try to get plenty of rest and sleep, and use every opportunity to relax.
- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of fluid (ideally water) a day.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and take regular meals.

## MEDICINES:

Various pain killers are available without prescription from your pharmacist. Over use of codeine / tramadol can cause headaches so check with your GP or pharmacist.

## WHEN DO I NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION?

Seek medical advice if over the counter treatments don't relieve your symptoms, or if you find it difficult to get on with your daily activities or go to work. Also speak to a health professional if you notice any of the following:

- Your headaches become more and more frequent.
- You vomit for no apparent reason or have a high fever.
- You develop a stiff neck or feel drowsy.
- You suffer from persisting headaches after a blow or other injury to your head
- Your headache prevents you from getting to sleep or wakes you.
- Your headache is worse on coughing, straining, bending, lying flat or laughing.
- You notice a change in speech or personality.
- You develop weakness, numbness or other odd sensations anywhere on your body, or you feel unsteady on your feet.
- Your eyes feel really uncomfortable when looking at bright light, or you suffer other new eye symptoms, such as sudden blind spots.
- You have muscle pains, pain on chewing, a tender scalp, or feel unwell.