

THE COMPLETE HEADACHE CHART

TYPE	SYMPTOMS	PRECIPITATING FACTORS	TREATMENT	PREVENTION
Allergy Headaches	Pain around forehead that can spread to one or both sides accompanied with allergy symptoms such as sneezing, itchy, watery eyes and sinus pressure.	Exposure to allergens such as pollen, mold, dust or food allergies.	Antihistamine medication, topical nasal cortisone related sprays or desensitization injections.	Avoidance of foods that cause allergies. Limit exposures to environmental allergens. Regular use of allergy medications or desensitization injections.
Exertion Headaches	These headaches become severe very quickly after strenuous activity.	Strenuous activities such as running or sexual intercourse. Also coughing, sneezing and straining with bowel movements.	Indomethacin, an anti-inflammatory agent that is taken before exertional activities or others such as Rofecoxib or aspirin	Alternative forms of exercise. Avoid jarring exercises.
Temperomandibular Joint (TMJ) Headaches	A muscle-contraction type of pain, sometimes accompanied by a painful “clicking” sound on opening the jaw. Infrequent cause of headache.	Tension and stress Chewing hard to chew foods such as pizza, bagels and chewing gum. Bruxism (grinding one’s teeth). Clenching of the jaw.	Fitted mouth guards. Stress relaxation exercises for the mouth and jaw. Muscle relaxers.	Avoid foods that are hard to chew. Wear a mouth guard nightly to prevent grinding teeth. Avoid stress and use regular mouth and jaw exercises to strengthen the muscle.
Migraine	A throbbing, pulsating headache that is usually worse on one side of the head, accompanied by dizziness, vertigo, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and fatigue, visual disturbances such as auras or flashing lights.	Bright lights and loud noises, relaxation after a period of mental or physical stress, prolonged muscle tension, lack of sleep, smoking or exposure to smoke, missed meals, exposure to alcohol & caffeine, menstrual periods, oral contraceptives, and certain foods such as red wine, cheese, chocolate, nuts, onions, dairy products, nitrates, MSG and processed foods.	Rest in a quiet darkened room. OTC pain relievers such as aspirin or ibuprofen. Ergotamine tartrate, propoxyphene, and triptans.	Avoidance of precipitating factors, biofeedback, propranolol, divalproex sodium. The calcium channel blockers and the NSAIDs may help prevent migraine headaches.
Cluster Headaches	These headaches are extremely severe and affect one side of the head. They are often associated with tearing of the eyes and nasal congestion. They tend to occur at the same time of day for weeks and then stop.	Appears to be related to a sudden release of histamine or serotonin by body tissues. Heavy smoking and alcohol use may trigger attacks. Glare, stress and certain foods can also cause attacks.	Inhalation of 100% oxygen seems to help some. Methysergide maleate, antihistamines, indomethacin, lithium carbonate, calcium channel blockers, propranolol, amitriptyline, verapamil, and cyproheptadine may help relieve pain.	Steroids, ergotamine, methysergide. Small regular doses of lithium carbonate for chronic cluster headaches, calcium channel blockers. Stop smoking and avoid alcohol use.