

Cluster headaches

Cluster headaches are less common than tension headaches or migraines. With a cluster headache, you have severe pain on one side of your head. You may have watery or red eyes on that same side of the head. You may also feel sweaty and have a runny nose.

Cluster headaches can start suddenly and last from 30 minutes to 2 hours. Many people have a cluster headache every day for a month or two. This can happen several times within a year. Men are more likely than women to get them.

If you suffer from cluster headaches, talk with your doctor. He or she may prescribe medication or recommend nonprescription medicine.

Poor vision causing headaches in kids? Probably not.

Parents often assume that poor vision causes their child's headaches. But research says otherwise.

One study showed that vision or eye problems are rarely the cause of kids' headaches, even when headaches occur during visual tasks like homework. The findings showed that there was no significant link between children's frequent headaches and a need for glasses.

Follow-up reports from parents showed that headaches improved in 75% (3 out of 4) of the kids. And their headaches were equally likely to improve whether or not they got a new prescription for glasses.

Headaches and eye problems

Eye strain is when your eyes get tired from using them intensely for a long time. Reading, doing close work or looking at a computer are common causes. Headaches and blurry vision can be symptoms of eye strain. To help, rest your eyes every hour by looking at something in the distance.

Diseases of the eye are one of the least common causes of headaches. But some serious eye problems can have headaches and vision changes as symptoms.

Angle-closure glaucoma is where fluid in the front part of the eye is suddenly blocked from draining out of the eye as it should. Eye pressure rises quickly. Symptoms include headache and severe pain in the eyes or above them. Other symptoms include feeling sick to your stomach and changes in your vision. This is a medical emergency. You should seek help right away if you have these symptoms.

Giant cell arteritis (GCA) is swelling in the arteries that run along your temple. Blood supply to the eye is reduced, causing decreased vision and a constant, throbbing pain in the temples. It also causes scalp tenderness. GCA is a medical emergency and needs to be treated right away to prevent vision loss in both eyes.

One of the most serious causes of headaches with vision changes is **stroke**. This is when blood flow to the brain is reduced or blocked. Stroke signs include a severe headache with a droopy eyelid, and possibly double vision. Get medical help right away if you have these symptoms.

Headaches can be caused by many diseases and disorders affecting other parts of the body. Some conditions that can cause headaches include:

- ear problems
- jaw problems
- sinus problems
- arthritis
- high blood pressure
- nerve diseases
- blood vessel disease
- tumors
- aneurysms (when a weak blood vessel fills with blood and bulges)

Figure out what causes your headaches

Tell your doctor if you get headaches often, or if you get very bad headaches. He or she will ask about your symptoms and medical history, and will examine you. You may also need certain tests to help find out what is causing your headaches.

How your headaches will be treated depends on their cause. If it appears that your headaches are caused by eye problems, you may be referred to an eye care provider.

Summary

Headache, or pain in any part of your head, is very common. Most of the time, it is not serious. They are often triggered by things like stress, certain foods, alcohol or being tired. There are many different kinds of headaches, including tension, cluster and migraine headaches. All of these can be treated with medicine.

Occasionally, headaches can be a symptom of eye problems. Angle-closure glaucoma and diseases of the blood vessels feeding the eyes can cause headaches. Stroke can cause severe headache and a droopy eyelid. Get medical help right away if you have these symptoms.

Your doctor can help find out what is causing your headaches and recommend treatment.

Get more information about migraines from EyeSmart—provided by the American Academy of Ophthalmology—at aao.org/headache-link.

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