

Journaling

Children and adolescents that have frequent headaches may have sensitive brains that react to triggers. The triggers may be ordinary activities, habits, or foods. Keeping a headache journal may help to identify triggers.

A headache may occur the day after experiencing the trigger.

Food Triggers

Eliminate one at a time for 7 – 10 days.

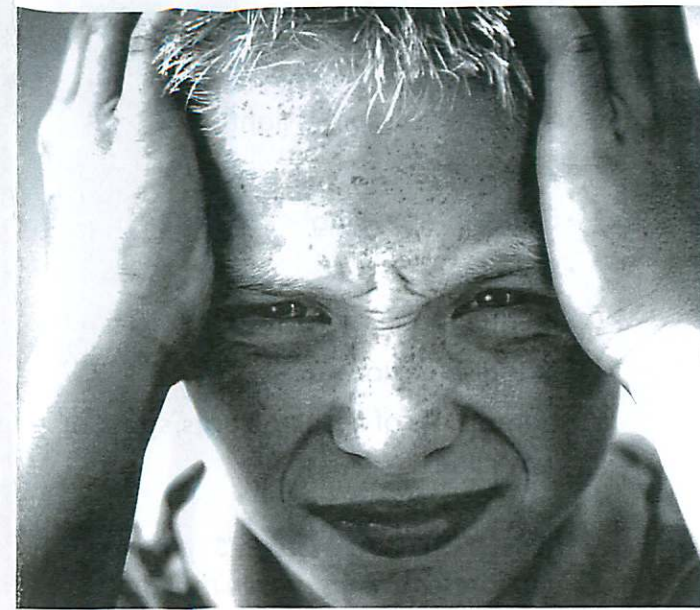
- Aged Cheese
- Chocolate
- Aspartame (diet beverages, candy, & gum)
- Monosodium glutamate (soups & Asian foods)
- Sulfites (found in wine & fermented products)
- Soy sauce
- Vinegar
- Nitrates and Nitrites (processed meats like hotdogs, bacon, & ham)

Medications: Time is Everything

The longer a headache remains untreated, the more resistant it becomes. Give rescue medications ordered by your health care provider at the first sign of a migraine. Early intervention may resolve the headache. Preventative medications are to be given each day, even if the headaches are less frequent. If preventive medications are taken as ordered, the need for rescue medications may not be necessary. If a dose is forgotten, do not give a double dose.

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childhood headaches

10 Migraine Modifiers for Children and Adolescents

Behavior Modifications

Medication Adherence

Alternative Therapies for Migraine Headaches

First Signs & Symptoms

- Shielding eyes from light
- Pale skin
- Difficulty speaking
- Yawning
- Frequent urination
- Sluggish or slow
- Complaints of flashing lights, spots, or wavy lines

10 Migraine Modifiers

Scientific research has proven that the following modifications reduce the frequency of migraines in children and adolescents.

1. High protein breakfast
2. Mid morning and afternoon snacks with non-caffeinated beverages
3. Less sugar in snacks (prevents high and low blood sugars)
4. Water or non-caffeinated beverages in desk or backpack
5. Water breaks during play or sports activities (2 quarts per day & 3 quarts in hot weather)
6. Limited screen time throughout day
7. Exercise daily (20 - 30 minutes day)
8. Consistent bedtimes and wake-up times 7 days a week (may go back to bed on week-ends after a breakfast)
9. Quiet bedtime routine, avoiding violent TV and violent video games
10. Limited caffeinated beverages to prevent insomnia

Vitamins and Supplements

The supplements listed below have proven to be the most effective in reducing the frequency of children's and adolescent's migraine headaches.

Coenzyme Q 10 was more effective than most of the preventive pharmaceuticals. However, results may not be seen for up to 3 – 6 months.

- Magnesium Oxide-4.5mgs per pound of body weight each day
- Coenzyme Q 10 gel caps – 100 mg each day
- Riboflavin – 200mg each day (less than 12 years) 400mg each day (12 years and older)

It is important for young children and adolescents to take these supplements on a daily basis to experience results.

School Regular Attendance is Extremely Important

Contact the child's teachers and request permission for the child to visit the school nurse at the first complaint of a migraine.

Provide the school nurse with a copy of your health care provider's order for the prescribed rescue medication to be administered before the pain becomes intense.

Provide the school with a note from the health care provider that requires a morning snack with 8 ounces of water

Provide high quality snacks and water to be stored in the school nurse's office.

Dental Examinations

Children and adolescents with frequent headaches should be screened for bruxism, which is clenching and grinding of the jaw that causes headaches. Mouth pieces can be custom made to be worn while your child sleeps.

Vision Testing

Children and teens with headaches should undergo vision testing, with an eye doctor.

Additional Therapies

Behavioral and Applied Relaxation Training & Guided Imagery

These techniques involve progressive relaxation with deep breathing and asking the child to visualize a pleasant scene or favorite activity. Children are often given an audio tape of the relaxation and imagery exercises. Insurance usually does not cover this therapy, but the Internet is a source for several relaxation therapies that may be helpful for children greater than 7 years of age.

The use of **acupuncture, yoga, therapeutic massage, and quiet music** has not been thoroughly researched in supplementing the treatment of pediatric migraine, however, some health care providers find them to be beneficial.