

Headache

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Symptoms

Headaches can be dull or intense, and either generalised or localised to a specific area of the head. Sometimes the neck is involved. Vision may be affected. Headache frequency and severity usually subsides within a couple of weeks if it is a [side effect](#) [1]An unwanted effect caused by the administration of drugs. Onset may be sudden or develop over time. of an HIV [antiviral](#) [2]A medication or substance which is active against one or more viruses. May include anti-HIV drugs, but these are more accurately termed antiretrovirals. drug you have just commenced.

Causes

Most HIV antiviral drugs can cause headache. Headache can be a symptom of advanced HIV disease and is also a symptom of some opportunistic infections. Chronic sinusitis which is common in people with HIV infection also causes headaches. Some foods such as chocolate and oranges can cause headaches, as can certain perfumes and environmental chemicals.

Complementary & Supportive Therapy

Ensure adequate hydration, as headache can be a symptom of dehydration.

Supportive therapies: Calming aromatherapy oils such as lavender, rose, and jasmine can assist in the relief of headaches. Cupping the hands over the eyes and staring gently into the darkness can help headaches caused by eyestrain (best done in a darkened room). Acupuncture and acupressure can reduce headaches. White flower oil is a Chinese remedy readily available at most Asian herb dispensaries and supermarkets, and can be rubbed onto the temples. Basil oil (*Ocimum basilicum*) may help and is applied in the same way. Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*) is a preventative herbal remedy for migrainous type headache (blurred vision/sensitivity to light), but its ability to stop migraine altogether may be slow and limited for some people. Retiring to a dark room and resting may relieve headaches. Head massage may help or as a counter initiative, a foot massage may assist by drawing blood away from the head, and lessening the tension and pain of certain headaches. Alternatively, place your feet in a tub filled with hot water.

Dietary supplements: A multi B vitamin tablet (e.g. Berocca) can help relieve tension headaches. Alternatively, vitamin C taken with an aspirin can assist cluster type headaches where the blood flow is 'stagnant' (not moving). Headaches may be soothed by tiger balm rubbed into the temples and brow (test your skin sensitivity first) or laying a chilled cloth on your brow.

Lifestyle : Adequate rest, good quality sleep, good diet, fresh air and healthy lifestyle choices can prevent headaches occurring. Relaxation and stress management techniques such as meditation, creative visualisation, massage and hypnosis can assist.

Medical & Drug Treatment

Aspirin is usually enough to reduce the pain of headaches. Paracetamol (e.g. Panadol) and other simple analgesics may also help relieve headaches. Tricyclic antidepressants may sometimes be prescribed by your doctor in severe cases.

Special Precautions & Considerations

Persistent ongoing headaches can signify health problems and serious health issues such as tumours. More often than not, there may not be distinguishable causes, in which case holistic approaches to health will reduce the likelihood of headaches occurring or their frequency or intensity. If you have persistent or frequent headaches, regardless of their degree of intensity or pain, consult your doctor about them.

Chiropractic manipulation will not help with headaches caused by HIV antiviral drugs. Chiropractic neck manipulation may only assist headaches if they are the result of a problem with the physical structures of the body.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/469>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/123>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/managing-side-effects/mouth-ulcers-other-mouth-conditions>

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/managing-side-effects/managing-common-side-effects>

[5] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/managing-side-effects/menstrual-problems>