

## How Come I Have Another Headache?

Headaches are often sparked by a “trigger”, a substance, event or situation that allows head pain to blossom. Keep pain from sidelining you by avoiding these common triggers.

- ◆ Erratic sleep. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day to avoid headaches that result from too little or too much sleep.
- ◆ Skipping meals. Hunger causes blood sugar levels to drop, which could bring on a headache.
- ◆ Stress. Practice relaxation techniques as part of your daily routine. Exercise, self-massage of neck and shoulder muscles, counseling and meditation are all possible solutions.
- ◆ Poor posture. Sit and stand up straight, and consciously relax your neck and shoulders.
- ◆ The three Cs. Cheese, chocolate and citrus fruits contain substances that cause blood vessels to swell. These can lead to headaches.
- ◆ Processed foods. Foods that contain monosodium glutamate (MSG), sodium, aspartame, and other artificial ingredients can trigger headaches.
- ◆ Odors. Smoke, perfume, varnish, paint, glue and printer toner- all of these can bring on a headache by smell alone. Notice how strong odors affect you and try to avoid them.

If a headache hits, try these pain-relief methods.

- ◆ Lie down in a quiet, dark spot when possible.
- ◆ Take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen or naproxen (unless unable due to a medical condition or interaction with other meds) as soon as you feel pain. Pain relievers work better if you take them early, rather than after pain escalates.
- ◆ Take a warm bath or shower or place a warm cloth or heating pad on the back of your head.

See your physician if your headaches are frequent or interfere with your daily life. A doctor can point you to other pain medications, a headache therapist, biofeedback, and self-care tips that can keep headaches from ruling your life. Don't suffer in silence.

God's richest blessings to you.

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