Is non-pharmacological treatment useful in headache?

Yes, in some primary headache disorders it will help.

What are the common triggers of Migraine?

- **Emotional Factors:** Stress (work, home, family), depression, anxiety, frustration,
- **Dietary Factors:** Alcohol, Nicotine, chocolate, caffeine, monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- **Physical Factors:** Getting too much or too little sleep, too much physical exertion, skipping meals, dehydration
- **Environmental Factors:** Travelling especially in the sun, changes in the weather, strong odors, bright lights
- **Hormonal Events:** Menstruation, oral contraceptives, hormone replacement therapies, menopause.

Discussion with your treating team will give you strategies to handle the different triggers that are specific to you.

What facilities available at NIMHANS for Headache? Whom should you contact?

First consultation for headache should always be with the general physician near you if the physician suggests you to consult at NIMHANS then.

Routine neurology OPD- For recurrent headaches approach the Neurology OPD for complete evaluation of your headache.

Emergency- If it is the first and worst headache in your life, consult a Neurology emergency

Headache clinic- In case of a need for further opinion, you will be referred from Neurology OPD to the Headache clinic. The Headache clinic happens on the working first and third Tuesdays in the Special Clinic OPD above the Staff clinic at 2.00 to 4pm.

Where to find this brochure?

NIMHANS Arogya Jagruti Kendra,
G-5 ground floor, OPD block, NIMHANS.

Contact us at:
nimarogyajagruti@gmail.com

Mentalhealtheducationnimhans.org

Mind space initiative:
https://nimhans.ac.in/mind-space/

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Bengaluru

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In collaboration with
Department of Mental Health Education and Department of Psychiatric Social Work

HEADACHE DISORDERS

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What is a Headache? How common are headache disorders?

Headaches are pain/discomfort in head, above a line joining your ear and eye. The pain can spread throughout the head or can be localised in a specific region. Headache disorders are among the most common second only to backache. They are seen both in men and women, more commonly in latter.

What are the different types of headache disorders??

The headache may be a disease by itself called as primary headache disorder. Examples are Migraine, Tension Headache. Usually they are recurrent and have set format of precipitation, duration of headache, associated symptoms and response to medicines. Headaches can be a manifestation of underlying disorder of the brain; it's covering and surrounding structure or some other physical disease. They can be recognised by red flags or dangerous symptoms. The most common are primary headache disorders which are not life threatening but may cause disability if not recognised and treated properly.

What are the red flags in headache? / When should I worry about my headache?

Headaches are worrisome when the following conditions are associated with your headache called as red flags or worrisome associations:

- Sudden, severe, worst headache of your life
- Headaches that first develop after age 50 years
- A major change in the pattern of your headaches, Headaches that get steadily worse
- Head pain that increases with coughing or movement

DON'T IGNORE THE RED FLAGS

- Headache associated with weakness of your limbs, vision deterioration, changes in personality or mental function, seizures
- Headaches that are accompanied by fever, stiff neck, confusion,
- Headaches after a severe injury to the head
- Headache in an elderly, diabetic, cancer and immunocompromised patient

How is headache diagnosed?

History and examination- A detailed history of headache episodes will be taken. We will also assess your physical and neurological examination and try to classify your headache in to primary and secondary headaches.

Investigations- No tests are required for a majority of primary headache disorders. Investigations are generally carried out to rule out any of the above-mentioned red flags if present in history or examination. This is primarily done through blood tests, CT scan and MRI scan.

Headache Diary- Recording details of your migraine attacks can be useful in, helping the doctor make a firm diagnosis, helping you recognize triggers and warning signs and response to treatment.

What is the Treatment for headache disorders?

Treatment depends on whether it is primary or secondary headache disorder. For a secondary headache disorder removing cause will take care of headache episodes. For primary headache disorder treatments aim to help stop symptoms and prevent future attacks. Medications used fall into two broad categories:

- Pain-relieving medications. Also known as acute or abortive treatment, these types of drugs are taken during headaches and are designed to stop symptoms.
- Preventive medications. These types of medicines are taken regularly, often daily, to reduce the severity or frequency of migraines.

Your treatment strategy depends on the frequency and severity of your headaches, the degree of disability your headaches cause, and your other medical conditions.

Is excessive over the counter pain killer consumption OK for my Headache?

No, it is not good. Sometimes it will become an addiction and cause a headache known as Medication overuse headache. Please consult your doctor and take medicines if headaches are bothersome.