

# Headache Diseases

## What you will learn

1. What the different types of headache diseases are
  - Migraine
  - Tension-Type Headache
  - Cluster Headache
  - Post-Traumatic Headache
2. What the headache threshold is
3. What the difference between preventive and acute treatment is

## Headache Diseases

- Headache diseases are complex neurological diseases.
- They commonly run in families meaning that your genetics likely play a role.
- You may have one type of headache disease or more than one.

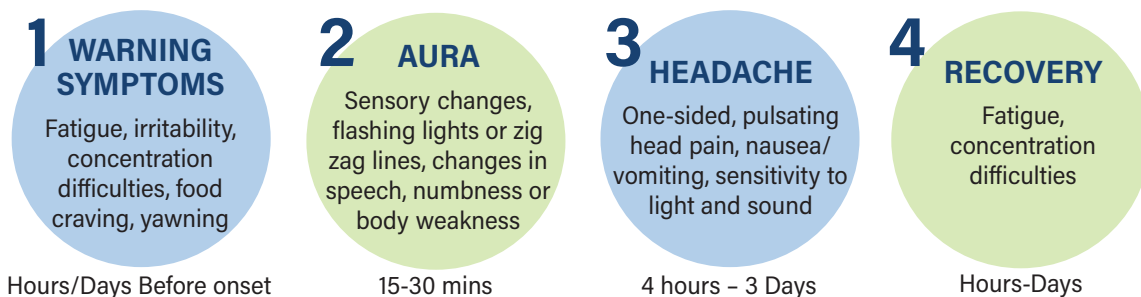
## What is Migraine and Why do I have it?



- Migraine is more than a headache – it is a complex neurological disease.
- The exact cause of migraine is not known. Your nervous system is sensitive to changes in the environment. There are many internal and external factors that change the likelihood of you experiencing headache pain.
- When you experience headache pain and associated symptoms (nausea, sensitivity to light and sounds), there are changes in the electrical signals in your brain, inflammation increases, and your nerves are activated.

## What are the stages of migraine

There are many stages of migraine and not everyone experiences all the different stages. Understanding the different stages and early warning signs allows you to act before your symptoms progress.



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## What is tension-type headache and why do I have it?



- Like other headache diseases, the exact cause of tension-type headache is not known.
- Having muscle tenderness is common in people with tension-type headache but it does not cause tension-type headache.
- When you experience tension-type headache symptoms, there are changes in the electrical signals in your brain, inflammation increases, and your nerves are activated.

## What is cluster headache and why do I have it?



- Cluster headache is a complex and rare neurological disease.
- While we do not know exactly what causes cluster headache, it is thought that many parts of the brain and nervous system play a role.
- Cluster headache onset is usually brief and can last anywhere from 15 minutes to 3 hours. Symptoms can happen every other day up to 8 times a day.
- In addition to severe pain on one-side of your face (usually around your eye) you may also notice, tearing or redness in your eye, lid drooping, stuffiness in your nose, or sweating on your face. It is common to also feel restless and agitated and want to move around a lot.
- You may have times when your cluster headache symptoms last for weeks or months followed by times when you do not have any symptoms for months to years.

## What is post-traumatic headache and why do I have it?



- Headache is the most common symptom after an injury to your head or neck. You might also have other symptoms such as difficulty concentrating, or feeling tired, anxious and irritable.
- It is thought that your nervous system plays a role in the symptoms you experience.
- The symptoms of post-traumatic headache are different for each person. You might have symptoms that look like migraine or tension-type headache or even cluster headache.



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## What is the headache threshold?



This red line represents your own personal headache threshold.

- Every time you are exposed to a potential headache contributing factor (e.g., poor sleep, missed meals, stress) imagine adding it to your jar.
- As you experience more and more events your jar “fills up”.
- When the jar overflows that is when your headache symptoms might progress.
- Remember, it is usually the **combination** of factors that move you toward that threshold.
- You can use your headache management skills to move your threshold or “empty out the jar” so you can live life more fully.

## What is the difference between preventive and acute medical treatment?

Headache treatment is either **preventive** or **acute**. Medical treatments used to manage your headache pain and symptoms can come in different forms including pill, injection, or devices.



### Preventative -

Use daily to reduce how often you have a headache



### Acute -

Use at the onset of a headache to treat your symptoms

## Setting Yourself Up for Success!

1. It usually takes around 2-3 months to see if your preventive medication is working well for you.
2. Keep taking your preventive medications even if your headache symptoms improve.
3. Make sure you know how much and how often you can use your acute medications.
4. Taking your acute medications too often can make your headache symptoms worse. Limit the number of acute medications you take to avoid causing Medication Overuse Headache.

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