

STOP GIVING YOURSELF A HEADACHE

Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale Provides 10 Tips for Preventing Headaches

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Pounding. Aching. Piercing. Nine out of ten people have experienced the unpleasant effects of a headache. Whether it's a little annoying or downright debilitating, a headache can change the nature of your entire day, and even your entire life in some cases.

The good news is that there are ways you can lessen the likelihood of experiencing headaches. This is important, because headaches tend to beget headaches – the more you have, the more you are likely to have.

- **Identify your triggers.** Find patterns in things that cause your headaches and take steps to avoid them – lack of sleep, dehydration, medications, missed meals, diet choices, for example.
- **Eat frequent, small meals.** Avoid low blood sugar by trying to eat something every few hours.
- **Keep consistent sleep patterns.** Try to get up at about the same time each morning and go to sleep at the same time every night.
- **Control your caffeine intake.** Avoid caffeine altogether, or at least keep your intake consistent and modest, taking in no more than one or two caffeinated beverages each day.
- **Treat headaches early.** Begin treatment within 30 minutes of the start of a headache. Treating after the pain has progressed is not as effective. Ibuprofen tends to help

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more than acetaminophen.

- **Be aware of high altitude headache.** Avoid going too high too fast during trips to high altitude (i.e. mountains or high plateaus), and make sure to stay well hydrated when you do. Medication may be helpful.
- **Assume your new time zone.** Don't go to bed later or get up earlier to keep on "your time." Stay well hydrated and well rested when you travel internationally.
- **Watch for hormonal shifts.** If headaches seem to correlate to your monthly menstrual cycle, consider taking ibuprofen daily for several days starting a few days before your cycle.
- **Watch your alcohol intake.** If you know you will be having a couple of social drinks and alcohol is a trigger for you, consider taking ibuprofen ahead of time and stay well hydrated. Remember, ibuprofen and alcohol can both irritate the stomach.
- **Avoid stress.** That's easier said than done, but anything you can do to reduce stress in your life and modify your response to stress will help keep headaches at bay.

If you're still having frequent headaches or if they're increasing in severity, seek medical treatment. Prevention is key and can make a world of difference, keeping you happier, healthier and more productive.

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To schedule an appointment, call 480-301-4141.