

# What do you know about headaches?

June 12 2023, by Laurel Kelly

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

June is Migraine and Headache Awareness Month, which makes this a good time to learn more about headaches.

Headache is [pain](#) in any region of the head. Headaches may occur on one or both sides of the head, be isolated to a certain location, radiate across the head from one point, or have a viselike quality. A headache may appear as a sharp pain, a throbbing sensation or a dull ache. Headaches

can develop gradually or suddenly, and may last from less than an hour to several days.

Headaches are generally classified by cause.

## Primary headaches

A primary headache is caused by overactivity of, or problems with, pain-sensitive structures in your head. A primary headache isn't a symptom of an underlying disease.

The most common primary [headaches](#) are:

- [Cluster headache](#)
- Migraine
- Migraine with aura
- [Tension headache](#)

## Secondary headaches

A secondary headache is a symptom of a disease that can activate the pain-sensitive nerves of the [head](#). Any number of conditions—varying greatly in severity—can cause secondary headaches.

Some types of secondary headaches include:

- [Medication overuse headaches](#)
- Sinus headaches
- Spinal headaches
- [Thunderclap headaches](#)

## When to seek emergency care

Your headache symptoms can help your health care team determine the cause and appropriate treatment. Most headaches aren't the result of a serious illness, but some may result from a life-threatening condition requiring [emergency care](#).

Seek emergency care if you're experiencing the worst headache of your life; a sudden, severe headache; or a [headache](#) accompanied by:

- Confusion or trouble understanding speech.
- Fainting.
- High fever, greater than 102 F to 104 F.
- Numbness, weakness or paralysis on one side of your body.
- Stiff neck.
- Trouble seeing, speaking or walking.
- Nausea or vomiting, if not clearly related to the flu or a hangover.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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