

WARREN COUNTY SCHOOLS  
HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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## Lifestyle Modifications:



### REST:

- Sleep no less than 7 hours per night and no more than 11 hours per night.
  - No TV or music on while sleeping – if you need noise, use a loud fan or a white noise machine instead.
  - No phone or texting during the night. Sleep needs to be uninterrupted.
  - Go to bed within 2 hours of normal bedtime on weekends and breaks from school.
  - If you typically go to bed very late, back up your bedtime by 30 minutes every night or so until you get to a time when you will be able to sleep at least 8-9 hours before waking for school.
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### Nutrition:

- No skipping meals. Eat 3 meals a day plus snacks in between.
  - Limit caffeine – none is best; no more than twice a week maximum.
  - If you're used to drinking caffeine on a regular basis, you will likely have more headaches as you reduce the amount of caffeinated beverages you drink.
  - Drink 48-64oz of water throughout the day.
  - Eat protein-rich foods at meals (eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, nuts, meats, etc.) and promote a healthy diet. Green vegetables, meats, and dairy products are especially helpful, for they provide nutrients which are important in headache prevention.
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### Activity:

- Engage in 45 minutes of physical activity 4 days a week. This should be cardiovascular activity, like jogging, dance, basketball, etc.
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### Other Tips:

- Stress is a common migraine trigger – counseling can be very helpful.
- Be patient – treating headaches takes time.
- Lifestyle modifications are essential for headache prevention!



## Headache Goals:



- The goal is for the child to miss as little school as possible – they should be at school unless they are vomiting.
- A realistic goal for good headache prevention is about 1-3 headaches in a month that can be relieved within about an hour. Relief doesn't necessarily mean that the child will be completely without pain, but that they can participate in most activities. Relief should be measured based on function, not on whether or not the pain is totally gone.

# Headaches

Headaches usually are brief and can be caused by many things, including too little sleep, eye strain, stress, sinus infections, or a bump to the head. Some headaches last longer and come with other symptoms. Very rarely, headaches can be a sign of something serious.



## Signs and Symptoms

The two most common types of headaches in children are tension headaches and migraine headaches.

### Of a tension headache:

- a feeling of squeezing or pressure around the front, sides, and back of the head
- dull, steady pain
- pain is not worsened by activity
- no nausea or vomiting
- muscles of the scalp, face, and shoulders may be sore to the touch

### Of a migraine headache:

- pounding, throbbing pain on one or both sides of the head
- pain is worsened by rapid motion
- dizziness, feeling tired
- nausea, vomiting, abdominal (belly) pain
- seeing spots or halos
- sensitivity to light, noise, and/or smells



## What to Do:

Most headaches require little medical intervention. To help ease pain, have the child:

- lie down in a dark, quiet room
- take acetaminophen or ibuprofen as needed
- put a cool, moist cloth across the forehead or eyes

### Seek Medical Care if the Child's Headaches:

- occur once a month or more
- don't go away easily
- are more painful than usual
- prevent the child from participating in everyday activities
- follow a head injury or loss of consciousness
- come with any of these symptoms:
  - decreased alertness or confusion
  - fever or persistent vomiting
  - seizures
  - changes in vision
  - weakness
  - skin rash
  - neck pain or stiffness



## Think Prevention!

Some types of headaches can be prevented by avoiding certain things that can cause them, such as getting too little sleep, certain medications, not drinking enough fluids, and using the computer or watching TV for a long time.