

Tips

Psycho-oncological support

If your pain is hard to control, it can make you feel bad and affect your life. Talk to your doctor about these impacts. If you need help, ask your healthcare team or your doctor for a referral to a psycho-oncological specialist (a healthcare professional who helps people with cancer cope with the emotional and psychological difficulties associated with the disease)

Further information on the topic

- **«Cancer Pain Control»** (National Cancer Institute, 2019) – Comprehensive guide explaining cancer pain, its causes, and how to manage it effectively with medications and other treatments
- **«Daily Pain Diary»** (American Cancer Society) – Tool to help track pain levels, medication use, and other factors to aid in managing cancer-related pain

See other Symptom Navi Flyers:

- **«Pain»** (2023)
- **«Pain relief with drugs»** (2023)

Headache

Good to know

Headaches can be caused by many things, such as:

- Inflammation or infection
- Medicines
- Side effects of cancer treatments (e.g. changes in the blood, dehydration).
- Influencing factors such as stress, not getting enough sleep, feeling tired or not doing enough exercise




Talk to your healthcare team about your headaches. If possible, the cause of your headaches should be treated.

Before your appointment, try to note the following:

- When and how often the headaches happen
- How long they last and how bad they are
- Where the pain is located (on the forehead, around the eyes, on one or both sides, on the back of the head...).
- What factors can cause them (light, noise, medication, menstruation...)
- What does the pain feel like (e.g. throbbing, pounding, stabbing or pressing)
- Any medication you are currently taking
- Symptoms that are often experienced together (vision problems, nausea, being sensitive to noise or light, increased pain when speaking or moving...)



Headache

| Do you feel... | Or you realise... | What you can do yourself... |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You sometimes get headaches but they are not too bad • They do not stop you from doing your daily activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your doctor before taking any pain medication. • Take prescribed medication as soon as the pain begins—don't wait until it becomes severe. • Drink enough (1.5 litres/day) and sleep 7-8 hours per night. Exercise regularly and practice relaxation techniques (breathing exercises, meditation). • If you have a headache, lie down and avoid bright light and loud noise. • Acupuncture or yoga can help reduce the frequency of headaches. |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You often get headaches • The headaches disrupt your daily activities • You suffer from nausea or constipation | <p>Follow the recommendations in the green box and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult your doctor, who may prescribe a different medication for you • Regularly discuss the effectiveness of the medication • Treat nausea or constipation early on. These symptoms can be prevented by drinking enough fluids, eating a high-fibre diet and taking laxative if necessary. |
|  | <p>New symptoms appear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have bad headaches. They start quickly or get worse when you move around. • You have fever above 38°C, a stiff neck, dizziness or vomiting • You have problems with balance, speaking, staying awake or a change in your vision • your arm or leg feels weak and a drooping corner of your mouth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your healthcare team immediately or go to the emergency department |