

Children's Emergency Department (CHED)

Headache Discharge Information Leaflet

Your child has been seen in the Emergency Department and the clinician has assessed that your child may be safely treated at home.

This leaflet is to advise you about how to manage your child's illness and to help you decide where and when to get further advice or assessment if needed.

Headaches in Children

Headaches in children are common and usually aren't serious. Like adults, children can develop different types of headaches including migraines and stress-related (tension) headaches.

Headaches in children usually can be treated with over-the-counter pain medications and healthy habits such as a regular schedule for sleeping and eating. Although most headaches in children do not have a serious cause, it's important to pay attention to your child's headache symptoms and consult a doctor if the headache worsens or occurs frequently.

How can I help my child when they have a headache?

- There may be things that trigger your child's headaches. If you can spot them, you can try to prevent them. Keeping a 'headache diary' can help.
- If your child's headaches are caused by poor quality sleep, make sure they wind down quietly at night before going to bed. It is advisable that they don't use computers, tablets, phones or watch television in bed as research has shown that this significantly affects sleep. It is advisable to limit screen time to no more than two hours a day and make sure they take breaks every half an hour.
- Headaches can be caused by skipping meals or not drinking enough, as well as a poor diet with too much processed foods and sugary drinks and snacks, so it might be helpful to record what your child is eating and drinking to identify any patterns or trigger foods.
- Stress and anxiety can also cause headaches, try to talk to your child to see if anything is worrying them.
- Eyesight problems might be a cause. You could have your child's eyesight checked by an optician.

Signs that would require you to consult a doctor urgently or return to the Emergency Department include if your child:

- Becomes very sleepy with their headache or is difficult to wake.
- Has a headache associated with confusion, disorientation or change in behaviour.
- Is waking often due to their headache.
- Has a headache which is worse on coughing or straining.

- Develops new, persistent blurring of their vision, double vision, new squint or abnormal eye movements.
- Develops new weakness/ loss of balance / co-ordination problems / abnormal head posture or walking difficulties.
- Develops vomiting overnight or persistent daytime vomiting related to headache.

Signs that would require you to consult your GP would be:

- If your child's headache is unresponsive to initial advice/treatment given by your doctor/nurse.
- If your child needs paracetamol or ibuprofen more than 3 times a week.
- If your child's headache is impacting on school attendance.

Giving medicines to your child

When your child has a headache, they can be given paracetamol or ibuprofen. When giving paracetamol you should always follow the instructions on the bottle. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions about these medicines:

- It is safe to give both medicines to your child if you don't go above the recommended dose for either in a 24-hour period or give them more often than the bottle says you can.
- It is recommended that if you give both you should wait at least an hour after giving the first medicine before deciding to give the second.
- It isn't dangerous to give them together but spacing them out helps by giving a better spread over 24 hours.
- Your child doesn't need to have a fever to benefit from medicines. You should give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen even if they don't have a fever if they seem miserable, in pain or don't want to eat or drink.

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit <http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx> Or scan QR code:

