

Get rid of your health niggles today...

Headaches

This month's team of experts explain how to stop headaches ruling your life and give good advice on how to manage them

The GP

Dr Wendy Lewis, GP at Parkmore Medical Centre & Family Physicians



'Headaches can be classified as primary or secondary, depending on the cause. Primary headaches include tension-type headaches, migraines and cluster

headaches. Secondary headaches are due to an underlying problem in the head or neck, for example tumours, infections or bleeding. Tension-type headaches are the most common type seen in general practice, and are usually a pressure pain lasting anything from 30 minutes to weeks. Migraines are associated with nausea, vomiting, sensitivity

to light, sound and movement, and can be triggered by various stimuli such as stress, overwork, alcohol and caffeine, poor posture, irregular sleep patterns, dehydration and leading a sedentary lifestyle. It's also important to note that overuse or abuse of painkillers can cause rebound headaches. Seek medical attention for new onset headaches associated with fever, stiff neck, vomiting, weakness or change in sensations, visual abnormalities and seizures.'

◆ Visit parkdocs.co.za to contact Dr Lewis and for more info.

The migraine expert

Dr Elliot Shevel, founder and medical director of The Headache Clinic



'In order to understand headaches, you need to understand the difference between what triggers and what causes them. A trigger is an external factor, such as stress, but stress itself is not painful. Causes, on the other hand, are a variety of physical structures inside the body, for example muscles, nerves, arteries and rarely the brain.

These structures are assessed to determine the most effective treatment and a number of options can be investigated including posture modifying technologies, physiotherapy, bloodless surgery and minimally invasive arterial surgery. In most cases, it's possible to get to the bottom of the problem and resolve the pain permanently. The longer the headache persists, the more damage is done.'

◆ Visit headacheclinic.co.za for more info.

The holistic practitioner

Dr Barbara Zeisler is a GP and Body Talk practitioner



'In our modern times we always have deadlines and expectations. Niggly headaches can be related to our stressful lifestyles and are also commonly caused by overindulgence in refined foods, excessive alcohol consumption and dehydration. Tension headaches, which feel like a tight band around the head (as well as migraines), are typically caused by stress from our everyday lives. Instead of popping pills to suppress symptoms, making lifestyle changes

will cure the cause and give permanent relief: food should consist of fresh, unrefined and, if possible, organic produce that's free of preservatives and additives; limit alcohol consumption; try to drink clean filtered water and watch out for food intolerances, too. Meditation, yoga, massage or life coaching will aid on the road to recovery. If your headaches are persistent, severe, increase in frequency and make you feel nauseous, you should seek urgent medical attention.

◆ Visit bodytalksystem.co.za or call Dr Zeisler on 011 465 3936 for more info.

Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated and avoid headaches.



Tip Keep a diary to see what triggers your headache. Note when it began, what you've eaten, how much sleep you've had, what you were doing as it started, and whether you'd been stressed. Add how long it lasted and how you stopped it.

Women like you

You say...



LISA HOLLICK, 40, FROM NELSPRUIT

'I've suffered with severe migraines since my teens and over the years had tried all

kinds of remedies to stop them, but it wasn't until I was pregnant and the headaches stopped completely that I realised they were connected to my hormone levels. Unfortunately, as my periods started again after having my baby, so did the headaches! Now I know that just before my period I'm at risk of a migraine, so I take care at that time to get plenty of sleep, eat healthily and remain well hydrated.'