

HEADACHES IN CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS: PATIENT MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Educate yourself and your family. Read about your type of headache and its treatment.
- 2) Maintain a headache diary; learn to identify and avoid headache "triggers."
- 3) Obtain written instructions from your physician.
- 4) Limit your use of over-the-counter (nonprescription) medications to no more than two doses per week. Excessive use can actually increase headaches.
- 5) Follow a regular schedule:
 - Don't skip meals, especially breakfast
 - Get 8 hours of sleep nightly
 - Avoid caffeinated foods (for example, chocolate), beverages (for example, teas, colas, coffee), and other dietary triggers (for example, aged cheeses, pizza, luncheon meats, sausage/hot dogs, other "junk" foods, Oriental foods containing MSG)
 - Minimize stress and other headache triggers
- 6) Daily school attendance IS A MUST!
- 7) Initiate non-drug measures at the earliest onset of your headache:
 - Seek rest in a quiet, comfortable location
 - Use relaxation strategies and other methods to reduce stress
 - Apply a cold compress
- 8) Don't wait!! Take the maximum allowable dosage of recommended medication(s) at the first sign of a severe headache.
- 9) Compliance -- take prescribed medication regularly, as directed, and maintain regular follow-up visits.
- 10) Communicate -- call your doctor when problems arise.

