



Headaches are a common symptom after a COVID-19 infection. They can last for weeks or months. If your headaches are frequent, severe, or debilitating, it may be best to speak to your health care provider about taking medication when a headache comes on, in addition to medication to prevent or reduce the headaches from occurring.

Is it possible to prevent headaches?

There are many common causes of headaches. If you are having headaches after COVID-19, these causes can worsen your headaches. Below are common causes and ways to address them at home:

- **Poor sleep** - ensure at least 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Not getting enough sleep can worsen mood and make it harder to cope with stressors. Don't consume caffeine later than early afternoon as this may interfere with your ability to fall asleep.
- **Dehydration** - inadequate consumption of fluids worsens headaches and also interferes with concentration. If your urine is dark yellow or if your mouth and lips are dry this means you are not drinking enough fluids.
- **Stress** - there are many ways to address stress, including getting regular exercise, setting aside time for enjoyable activities, and connecting with others that can provide support. You can also try an app or online program for Emotional and Mental Well-being (list can be found at: <https://uhs.umich.edu/apps-stress>). If your stress is severe or unmanageable, talk with your provider and/or therapist and check out these resources:
 - University of Michigan Depression Center Toolkit at <https://www.depressioncenter.org/depression-toolkit>
 - University Health Service resources for students and the U-M community: <https://uhs.umich.edu/stressresources>.
- **Inadequate nutrition** - skipping meals or not consuming enough food can also worsen headaches. Make sure you are eating three meals per day and that your diet is balanced.

- **Headache triggers** such as chocolate, alcohol, and cigarette smoke. Avoid them.

How can I relieve headaches?

Headaches can often be treated at home. Measures you can take include:

- Resting in a dark room with your eyes closed
- Applying a cold compress to your forehead
- Taking an over-the-counter medication like ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or naproxen (as long as you do not have any medical conditions or allergies that would make taking these medications unsafe).

If your symptoms do not resolve with these measures, follow up with your primary care clinician.

When should I seek medical care?

- If your headaches are frequent and get worse ask your primary care provider for an evaluation.
- If your headaches are severe or intolerable or if you have any of the following in addition to headaches seek immediate care or call 911.
 - fevers
 - unexplained weight loss
 - neurologic symptoms like numbness, tingling, slurred speech, vision changes, weakness, and balance problems

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