

A close-up photograph of a young child with freckles, smiling warmly at the camera. The child is wearing a blue jacket. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green foliage and a brick wall.

HELP WITH HEADACHES

How to prevent headaches

Proper headache hygiene can help prevent headaches before they start.

Get better sleep

- make sure your child or youth has a regular bedtime and wakes up at the same time each day, even on weekends
- don't let your child sleep more on the weekend to make up for too little sleep during the week
- ensure your child gets between 8-11 hours of sleep every night
- make the bedroom a screen-free zone (this means charging devices overnight in another room!) for at least one hour before bedtime
- restrict your child or youth's daily screen time – high screen time can cause headaches

CHEO's research has helped develop Canadian screen guidelines:

- school aged children (5-17 years) should get no more than two hours of recreational screen time per day and the less time the better

Keep a balanced diet

- start your child's day by giving them a high protein breakfast (yogurt, cheese and milk are good options) within one hour of waking up— this prevents sudden drops in blood sugar
- keep your child's blood sugar levels stable by giving three meals a day with 1-3 snacks in between
- include protein, carbohydrates, and vegetables or fruit at each meal
- give your child plenty of water to drink throughout the day and avoid sugary, or caffeinated beverages like Kool-Aid®, sports drinks, coffee, tea and energy drinks

Stay active

- ensure your child has at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day – this helps reduce stress and keep them fit

Learn to manage stress

- try participating in relaxation exercises like yoga or mindfulness practice – there are many applications for mobile devices and android devices for this

Keep a headache diary

A headache diary will help your doctors manage your headaches. It can help identify triggers and treatment responses. Please bring your headache diary to your clinic visits. You can use a regular calendar or notebook, or visit cheo.on.ca and search headaches for a list of helpful apps.

Take supplements

Supplements may lower how often your child gets headaches. They may take a few months to work and must be taken daily.

Magnesium**Dose:**

- 9 mg/kg/day magnesium divided in three daily doses
- start at low dose and slowly increase to effective dose

Available in:

- capsules (magnesium glycinate containing 165mg magnesium) – may be opened and sprinkled on food for a neutral taste
- liquid (magnesium citrate containing 8 mg/mL magnesium)
- tablets

Side effects: diarrhea at higher doses – reduce total daily dose if diarrhea occurs

Coenzyme Q10

Dose: 1 to 3 mg/kg/day once a day

Available in:

- capsules (30 mg, 60 mg) – may be opened and sprinkled on food for a neutral taste
- softgels (50 mg, 100 mg, 150 mg)

Side effects: upset stomach – take with food to reduce upset stomach

Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)

Dose: 400 mg once a day

Available in: tablets (50 mg, 100 mg): best swallowed (bitter taste)

Weight (kg): _____

Dose(s) and supplements recommended:

How to treat a headache

Despite your best efforts, headaches happen. Medications given at the first signs of a headache may help your child feel better. Avoid regular use of these medications. Give them medication no more than 15 days out of a month.

Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, etc.)

Dose:

- 10 mg/kg/dose (max 800 mg/dose) – may repeat second dose in six hours.
- total per day: 40 mg/kg/day (max 3200 mg/day)

Available in: tablets, chewable tablets, softgels and liquid

Side effects: upset stomach – take with food to reduce upset stomach

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)

Dose:

- 15 mg/kg/dose (max 1000 mg/dose) – may repeat second dose in four hours.
- total per day: 75 mg/kg/day (max 4000 mg/day)

Available in: tablets, chewable tablets and liquid

Side effects: upset stomach – take with food to reduce upset stomach

Weight (kg): _____

Dose(s) and medications recommended:

Need information? Visit cheo.on.ca

Use our handy search tool to find CHEO-approved health resources, clinic information and much, much more!



Have you registered for MyChart?

MyChart is a **FREE** secure, online patient portal that connects patients to parts of their CHEO electronic health record, anywhere, at any time.

To apply for MyChart access, visit cheo.on.ca/mychart and fill out the MyChart access request form. Once your application has been approved, we'll send you an email with an activation code and instructions on how

