

Dear Family,

You or your child's doctor requested this appointment due to your child's headaches. If this is not the correct reason for your upcoming appointment please let our office know.

We have included a **Headache Journal and Questionnaire** in this packet. Please fill out these forms before your first appointment. You will also find some basic information on Pediatric Headaches. We hope that you will find this information helpful.

What are Headaches?

Headaches are pain in a child's head or face area. We do not yet know the cause of all headaches. We think that most headaches are caused by muscles in the head tightening or blood vessels inside the head dilating, or getting bigger.

What are Headache Triggers?

Many people find that certain food, activity, or environments bring on a new headache. These things are called "headache triggers". Headache triggers can also make headaches worse. Not all children have headache triggers. However, for some children headache triggers include:

- Aged cheese
- Caffeine
- Chocolate
- Nuts
- Strong smells
- Change in weather
- Fatigue, or not getting enough sleep
- Skipping meals or eating too little
- Stress
- Bright lights
- Hormones, menstrual cycle in women
- Eye Strain, staring at a computer or television screen

What is a Headache Journal?

A headache journal is a tool you can use with your doctor to help learn more about you or your child's headaches. This journal can help you keep track of how often your child has headaches, how painful the headaches are, and if anything specific triggers the headaches. Journals also help keep track of what makes your headaches better or worse.

We have provided a headache journal in this packet which you can complete prior to your first appointment. Please bring this journal with you to your first appointment.

What are Common Treatments for Headaches?

Specific treatments for your child's headaches will be determined by your child's doctor. Some treatments help get rid of headaches after they have started. Other treatments try to prevent headaches from happening at all. Even before your child's first appointment, there are several treatments that you can try at home.

Many children find these treatments helpful when having a headache:

- ✓ Rest in a dark, quiet room
- ✓ Place a cold or warm cloth on your child's head.
- ✓ Gently massage your child's head where the pain is
- ✓ Medication: Ibuprofen can help many children who have headaches. You should ask your pediatrician how much Ibuprofen your child should take. Ibuprofen and other over the counter medications such as Tylenol work best when they are taken as soon as a headache starts.

Your Child can also try to prevent future headaches by:

- ✓ Avoid known headache triggers
- ✓ Get enough sleep every night, your pediatrician can help tell you how much sleep your child needs based on his/her age
- ✓ Eat three healthy meals a day.
- ✓ Drink lots of fluids, children should 8 glasses of water a day.
- ✓ Exercise or participate in some form of physical activity daily.

When should I call my doctor?

It is important to let your doctor know if headaches are becoming more severe or more frequent. Call your doctor right away if your child has any of the following:

- Sudden onset of the "worst headache ever" or pain that is VERY different than past headaches.
- Personality changes
- Weakness in the arms or legs
- High fever or trouble bending his or her neck