



## Scarborough College

### HEADACHE TREATMENT PROTOCOL

Headaches can occur in children of any age. They are usually less severe and resolve quicker than those in adults.

They can be classified as tension type headaches or migraine. They may also be related to other illnesses, conditions, exhaustion, dehydration or eye strain.

Tension headaches are often bilateral, cause a tightening or pressing sensation of mild to moderate pain. Often resolved after 30 minutes.

Migraine headaches may be unilateral or bilateral. Cause moderate to severe pain characterised by a banging or throbbing feeling. May cause associated nausea, photophobia and visual disturbances. Can last for up to 72 hours.

#### Symptoms

- Pain in any part of the head.
- Visual disturbance.
- Nausea.
- Anxiety and upset.

#### Examination

- Establish location and type of pain.
- Check for other symptoms including pyrexia.
- Check for history of migraine.
- Check child is adequately hydrated and has eaten recently.

#### Treatment

- Lie them down in a quiet, dark room.
- Put a cool, moist cloth across their forehead or eyes.
- Get them to breathe easily and deeply.
- Encourage them to sleep, as this speeds recovery.
- Encourage them to eat or drink something (but not drinks containing caffeine).

## Medication

Medication of choice is oral paracetamol, kept as a stock item. Dose as follows:

Paracetamol Suspension 120mg/5ml

2 - 4 years	7.5ml	4 times in 24 hours
4 - 6 years	10ml	4 times in 24 hours

Paracetamol Suspension 250mg/5ml

6 - 8 years	5ml	4 times in 24 hours
8 -10 years	7.5ml	4 times in 24 hours
10 - 12 years	10ml	4 times in 24 hours
Not more than 4 doses in 24 hours		
Allow at least 4 hours between doses		
Do not give for more than 3 consecutive days without speaking to doctor or pharmacist.		

Children over 12 years may have Paracetamol tablets 500mgs or soluble preparations 500mgs

12 - 16 years 500mg - 750mg (one to one and half tablets)

16 years and adults 500 mg - 1 gram (one to two tablets)

Migraine may be treated with child's own prescription medication kept at school. **Caution** Seek medical advice and/or call parents if:

- Worsening of headache and /or fever.
- Evidence of neurological deficit.
- Personality change.
- Reduced consciousness.
- Previous head injury (within last 3 months).
- Petechial rash is noted.
- Stiff neck or photophobia.
- Pain not reduced by rest and medication.

## References

- NICE guidelines [www.nice.org.uk/guidelines/cg150](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidelines/cg150)
- NHS.uk/livewell/headaches 2017
- Migraines in children [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

**Protocol Last Reviewed** - September 2019