

Mayo Clinic Medical Edge

N26 Managing Headaches

Intro: Headaches are very common. The World Health Organization reports up to three-fourths of all people suffered some sort of headache within the last year. For some, headaches are no big deal. But for others they can be debilitating. Experts at Mayo Clinic have tips of how to manage headaches.

Video

Audio

TRT 2:02	
Voice of Vivien Williams	For years, James Masanz's [maw'-sin] headaches were a 24-7 event.
James Masanz Head ache sufferer	"I was having two migraines a week and having headaches nearly daily."
Voice of Vivien Williams	The pain impacted his work and family life. James often wouldn't have the energy to play with his son Will.
James Masanz	"I would come home from work and just go to sleep."
Voice of Vivien Williams	The headaches hurt, but the migraines were worse.
James Masanz	"As if someone was poking something in my left eye."
	Frustrated, James went to Mayo Clinic where he met Dr. Robert Sheeler.
Robert Sheeler, M.D. Mayo Clinic Family Medicine	"The two most common types of headaches are tension headaches and migraine headaches."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Dr. Robert Sheeler says tension headaches tend to be milder and last from a few hours to several days. Migraines are often more intense.
Robert Sheeler, M.D. Mayo Clinic	"Migraine is what we call a channelopathy. There are excitatory neurotransmitter channels in the brain that are overactive and so migraine brain is sort of like a Ferrari. It's high performance but high maintenance and people with migraine have a lower threshold to trigger off a cascade of

	things that can end up with a host of symptoms, the last of which is a headache.
Voice of Vivien Williams	Treatment can be tricky. Dr. Sheeler says first he looks for the correct diagnosis. Is it tension headache or migraine? Then,
Robert Sheeler, M.D. Mayo Clinic	"You find out how it's affecting the patient's life and how frequent it is."
Voice of Vivien Williams	That information helps determine the type of medication that may work best. Treatments range from over the counter analgesics such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen to migraine specific prescription medications to antidepressants to mind/body techniques such as tai chi, meditation or yoga. Dr. Sheeler says the key is to treat symptoms early and avoid things that may trigger headaches.
Voice of Vivien Williams	Medication and mind/body techniques have helped James gain control of his headaches.
James Masanz	"It's probably just one plain headache a week."
Voice of Vivien Williams	And now instead of battling pain, he's able to spend the afternoon enjoying time with his son Will.
James Masanz	"For that I'm grateful."
	For Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Vivien Williams.

Anchor tag:

Again, Dr. Sheeler says the two most common types of headaches are tension headaches and migraines, and to treat them properly, it's often important to distinguish which one you're dealing with.

He says it's also important to make sure the headache is not the result of an underlying problem such as an aneurysm, tumor or other serious disease. If you have significant headaches, it's key to see your health care provider and to get a detailed neurologic evaluation.

Headaches are often not cured, but with proper treatment, patients may greatly reduce the frequency and severity of their headaches and get back into life.

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