



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Migraine Headaches: After Your Child's Visit

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Migraines are severe, throbbing headaches that usually occur on one side of the head, but they can move from side to side or affect both sides. They often occur with nausea, vomiting, and extreme sensitivity to light, noise, and smells. Changes in vision such as flashing lights or dark spots may happen before the headache.

Kids get migraine headaches too. Migraine headaches often run in families. Migraine headaches can be caused—or “triggered”—by a variety of things, including certain foods (chocolate, cheese, fast food) or odors, smoke, bright light, stress, dehydration, hunger, or lack of sleep.

Without treatment, your child’s migraine headache can last 4 to 72 hours. For most children, migraine headaches return from time to time. Home treatment can help reduce how often and how uncomfortable the migraine headaches are.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child’s treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It’s also a good idea to know your child’s test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

How can you care for your child at home?

- Begin home treatment at the first sign of a migraine. Your child should go to a quiet, dark place and relax. Most headaches will go away after rest or sleep.
- Let your child know that watching TV or reading while he or she has a headache can make the headache worse.
- If your doctor has prescribed medicine to stop your child’s migraines, have your child take it at the first sign of a migraine. This can help stop the headache before it gets worse. If

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your doctor has prescribed medicine to be taken daily, make sure that your child takes it every day even if he or she does not have a headache.

- If your doctor has not prescribed medicine for your child's migraines, give your child a pain reliever, such as children's acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness.
- Put a cold, moist cloth or ice pack on the part of the head that hurts. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your child's skin. Do not use heat—it can make the pain worse.
- Gently massage your child's neck and shoulders.
- Do not ignore new symptoms that occur with a headache, such as a fever, weakness or numbness, vision changes, or confusion. These may be signs of a more serious problem.

To prevent migraine headaches:

- Keep a headache diary so that you can figure out what triggers your child's headaches. Record when each headache begins, how long it lasts, where it hurts, and what the pain is like (throbbing, aching, stabbing, or dull). Write down any other symptoms your child has with the headache, such as nausea, flashing lights or dark spots, or sensitivity to bright light or loud noise. List anything that might have triggered the headache. When you know what things trigger your child's headaches, try to avoid them.
- Make sure that your child drinks 4 to 8 glasses of fluid a day. Avoid drinks that have caffeine. Many popular soda drinks contain caffeine.
- Make sure that your child gets plenty of sleep. Most children need to sleep 8 to 10 hours each night.
- Encourage your child to get plenty of exercise.
- Make sure that your child does not skip meals. Provide regular, healthy meals.
- Keep your child away from smoke. Do not smoke or let anyone else smoke around your child or in your house.
- Find healthy ways to deal with stress. Do not overbook your child's time.
- Seek help if you think your child may be depressed or anxious. Treating these problems may reduce the number of migraines your child has.
- Limit the amount of time your child spends in front of the TV and computer.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

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- Your child has a very painful, sudden headache that is unlike any he or she has had before.
- Your child has a fever with a stiff neck.
- Your child has a headache with sudden weakness, numbness, inability to move parts of his or her body, visual problems, slurred speech, confusion, or behavior changes.
- Your child has headaches after a recent fall or blow to the head.

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your child's headaches become more painful or frequent.
- Your child's headache does not go away as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter J120 in the search box to learn more about "**Migraine Headaches: After Your Child's Visit**".

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