

Does your head hurt? You're not alone.

If you suffer from headaches, you're not alone. Nearly 90 percent of men and 95 percent of women have had at least one headache in the past year.

Did you know?

- 45 million Americans suffer from chronic headaches.
- Four million doctor visits a year are for headaches.
- 70 percent of all migraine sufferers are women.
- Headaches cost billions of dollars in lost productivity every year.
- More than half of migraine sufferers remain undiagnosed.

Above statistics are from the National Headache Foundation and the American Council for Headache Education.

What is a doctor of internal medicine?

Doctors of internal medicine (also known as “internists” or “general internists”) specialize in treating adults. We don’t deliver babies or treat children, and we don’t do surgery. An internist can be your primary care doctor, just like a general practitioner or family practice doctor.

Internists have undergone special study and training focusing on adult diseases and prevention. At least three of our seven or more years of medical training are dedicated to learning how to prevent, diagnose and treat diseases primarily affecting adults.

More information
on headache can be
found online at
www.doctorsforadults.com

Produced by the
American College of Physicians –
American Society of Internal Medicine
(ACP–ASIM)

190 N. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1572
800 523 1546, ext. 2600

700100220

© 2002 AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS–AMERICAN SOCIETY OF INTERNAL MEDICINE

Tension? Migraine? Cluster?

Which headache
type do you
suffer from?



INTERNAL MEDICINE
DOCTORS FOR ADULTS®

A Common Disorder

Headaches are more than just a nuisance. They can last minutes, days, or even months, and they can affect your overall well-being.

Chronic headaches are headaches that have been occurring for over a month. There are three main types:

- Tension headaches typically feel like a tightening on both sides of the head. They can last for minutes or days and can happen frequently.
- Migraine headaches are intense and throbbing, often involve one side of the head, and can make you sensitive to light or noise. Migraines last from hours up to three days and are more common in women. Some sufferers have an “aura,” a group of visual symptoms, just before an attack.
- Cluster headaches are non-throbbing and usually are felt on one side of the head behind that eye. More common in men, they can happen over several days, usually lasting 30 to 45 minutes.

Talk to Your Internist

If you suffer from chronic headaches, talk to your doctor of internal medicine (internist) about it. Your internist may check your entire body and do a neurological exam—an exam that looks for your response to certain touches—and test your strength, coordination, and balance.



Your internist may ask you:

- Is the pain on one or both sides of your head?
- Is it a throbbing or tightening feeling?
- How long do your headaches last?
- Do you get headaches when you're stressed?
- Do certain foods trigger the headache?
- Do you get nausea or vomiting with the headache?
- Do you get funny feelings or see lights or black spots just before the headache starts?

Reviewing your symptoms is the first step toward working with your internist to manage your headaches.

Some good news about migraines

If your internist diagnoses you with migraine headaches—or if you haven't seen your internist about your migraines in years—you should know:

- Migraine attacks can be treated or prevented.
- Newer migraine treatments have become available over the last decade.
- Treatments can range from over-the-counter drugs to prescription medication, depending on the severity or frequency of your migraines.
- You may be a candidate for preventive therapy.



You and your internist can decide on a migraine treatment plan that fits your health and lifestyle. You may need to try different drugs and dosages for relief, and you may need to be re-evaluated regularly by your internist.