

Cervicogenic headaches...

Information and advice

These are headaches which may be caused by neck injuries or severe high blood pressure. They often begin at the top of your neck, and move into your head.

If you've recently had a head injury which is causing you headaches, please speak to your GP for advice.

Signs and symptoms

Cervicogenic headaches can last a few moments at a time, and can be treated with painkillers. You may often have the following symptoms:

- Headaches caused by moving your neck
- Pain, pressure or stiffness at the top of your neck, or bottom of your head
- Trouble moving your head or neck
- One sided neck, shoulder or arm pain

What should I look out for?

Most headaches aren't caused by a serious condition. However, if you start having any of the following symptoms, please contact your GP:

- Feeling light headed or dizzy
- Difficulty talking or swallowing
- Headaches getting worse even with painkillers
- Sudden fainting, nausea or vomiting
- Facial numbness, or feeling pins and needles
- Double vision or uncontrolled movements of your eyes

What can I do to help prevent the headaches?

- Maintain a good sitting posture
- Avoid long periods of sitting or not moving in general
- Sleep in a comfortable position, making sure your head and neck are supported with pillows
- Keep yourself well hydrated
- Exercise regularly to stimulate the circulation of blood to your head
- Consider an eye check to make sure this is not playing a part in the headaches
- Relaxation and mindfulness apps or CDs may help if you're feeling stressed
- At work, arrange your workstation so that you can reach everything comfortably

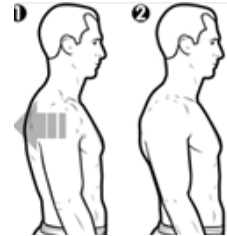
Exercises

These exercises can help reduce the effects of the headaches. You can do them standing or sitting. Follow the steps below slowly, but stop if you feel uncomfortable.

- Turn your head slowly to look over your left shoulder and hold for 5-10 secs. Then turn to look over your right shoulder and hold for 5-10 secs
- Repeat each side 5 times



- Shrug shoulders up, back and around. Hold for 5-10 secs then relax
- Repeat each side 5 times



- Sitting in a chair with your arms across your chest, turn your trunk to the right and hold for 5 secs. Then turn to the left
- Repeat each side 5 times



- Tilt your head slowly towards your left shoulder, and hold for 5-10 secs. Return to the middle and tilt to your right shoulder, and hold for 5-10 secs



- Stretch both hands over your head as high as possible
- Hold for 5-10 secs
- Repeat each side 5 times



If you feel the exercises are making your symptoms worse, take a break. You can also speak to your GP for further help. This doesn't mean it's anything too serious. It may be that you need some extra help to deal with the symptoms, and you may be referred to a physiotherapist.

How to contact us

If you need to contact us or require further information...

East Berkshire: Windsor, Maidenhead, Slough, Ascot, Bracknell

Call: 0300 365 5678

Email: Mskphysioadmin@berkshire.nhs.uk

West Berkshire: Wokingham, Newbury, Reading

Call: 0118 955 0415

Email: admin.rdgphysio@berkshire.nhs.uk

