

Tension Headaches

What is it?

- **Tension Headaches**- tightness of pain in the muscles of the back, neck, and shoulders, a previous neck injury, arthritis
 - **Feels like**- a band around your head, whole head is sore, pressure sensation, pressure above the eyes, pain can affect the jaw, upper back, face, neck, and arms, and shoulders
 - **Tension Headaches**- 90% of all headaches, become more severe and frequent with emotional and physical stress



Facts:

- **Cool Compress**- to neck area, or a cool bathcloth on your forehead
- **Deep Breathing**- touch area on both sides of the head where it is painful, breathe in and hold and let it go, do several times, often can help your headache; inhale and exhale slowly trying to relax your neck and head muscles
- **Pressure**- apply pressure to the forehead area above the eyes, down the top of the nose and under the cheek bones to help drain the nasal passages

What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- talk with about a mild medication to take at the first sign of a headache
- **Relaxation Exercises**- breathing, muscle relaxation, get with a massage therapist or a Physical Therapist, gently massage neck and shoulders, treat yourself to a massage, stretch often, water therapy
 - **Sleep**- can relieve headaches
- **AVOID**- heat makes a headache worse
- **Exercise**- daily to reduce stress and muscle tension, sex often relieves headaches
- **Keep a Diary**- date, time, severity, stress, activity, food, bright light, location of the headache, physical symptoms, medications, menstrual cycle if female (birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy), caffeine, alcohol

