

Potty Pointers

5 Common Headache Triggers

Headache sufferers spend more than \$4 billion a year on over-the-counter pain relievers. But prevention costs you nothing. **Here are five leading headache culprits to watch out for:**

- 1. Stress:** Frayed nerves are a frequent cause of “tension” headaches and may also trigger migraines. Take 30 minutes a day just to daydream, meditate or otherwise relax. Daily exercise also helps ease stress and tension.
- 2. Eyestrain:** Focusing on one object for a long time (such as a computer screen) can cause temporary head pain. Take occasional “eye breaks” by looking out a window; consider an eye exam to see if a vision problem may be a factor in your headaches.
- 3. Diet:** Certain foods contain substances that can trigger headache pain. **Examples:** caffeine, red wine, processed meats, chocolate, cheese, citrus fruits, lentils, snow peas and monosodium glutamate (MSG).
- 4. Sitting:** Staying seated for long periods, especially if you’re on the phone or hunched over for extended periods, can tighten muscles and lead to tension headaches. Shift positions; stretch once an hour; stand during phone conversations; take a lunchtime walk.
- 5. Sleep:** Too little or, surprisingly, even too much sleep can bring on headaches. Control your body’s internal “clock” by going to bed and getting up at the same time each day—even when you’re not working.

