

Information for Consumers - Headache (Constant or Repeated)

This article tells you about headache and how it is diagnosed, including what imaging tests you may need to have.

What is a headache?

A headache is where you have pain in your head, but sometimes your pain may also be in your neck or the top of your back. Headaches are one of the most common problems people complain about. Most headaches are caused by migraine, tension, eye strain, not drinking enough water, low blood sugar or sinusitis.

Diagnosis

Your doctor will discuss the signs and symptoms of your headache. You would not normally need an x-ray or CT scan for diagnosis, but if your doctor thinks something more serious may be causing your headache, he/she may request a CT scan.

The following are some of the reasons that may lead your doctor to request a x-ray or CT scan:

- Abnormal behaviour or mental state changes
- Fever or neck stiffness
- If you have cancer
- Headache causing waking from sleep
- Recent use of amphetamine or cocaine
- If you are pregnant or just given birth
- New headache if you are elderly
- Progressively worsening headache

Depending on what the CT scan shows, your doctor may request further tests which may include MRI and/or other tests.

Results

A Radiology doctor will look at your scans and write a report for your doctor.

Further information

For more detailed information, please access InsideRadiology at: www.insideradiology.com.au

This is a resource produced especially for consumers by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists: www.ranzcr.edu.au

A guide to gathering information that you may need for making informed decisions is published by the Consumers' Health Council of Australia at: <https://chf.org.au>

If you would like to look at other relevant articles, please access the following:



- [CT scan](#)
- [MRI scan](#)
- [Radiation risks of x-rays and scans](#)

Or access the Diagnostic Imaging Pathways website at:
www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au/index.php/consumer-info

Or if you have questions or require any further information please contact your doctor.

Consumer participation

This information has been reviewed by representatives from the following groups:

- Aboriginal people
- People with disabilities
- Seniors
- CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)
- The Health Consumers' Council

Feedback

All feedback, comments and suggestions regarding consumer information at Diagnostic Imaging Pathways are welcome. Please direct them to the following email address: dipfeedback@health.wa.gov.au

Disclaimer

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Date reviewed: July 2017

Date of next review: July 2019