

## *Employee Newsletter*



**Well Connect**  
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# Horrible Headaches

**The most common headaches are likely caused by tight muscles in your shoulders, neck, scalp, and jaw. These are called tension headaches. They are often related to stress, depression, or anxiety.**

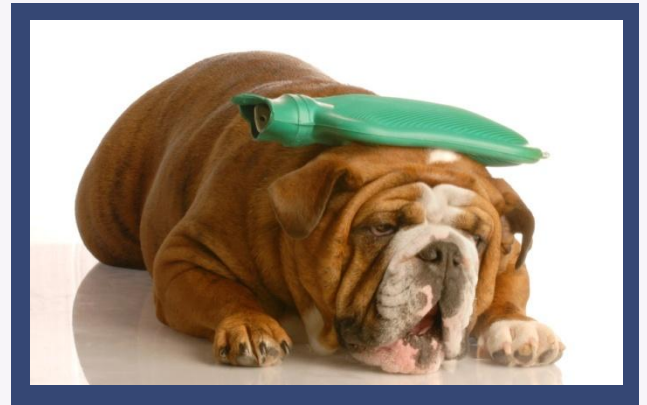
Overworking, not getting enough sleep, missing meals, and using alcohol or street drugs can make you more likely to get them. Headaches can be triggered by:

- Cheese
- Chocolate
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)

People who drink caffeine can have headaches when they don't get their usual daily amount.

Other common causes include:

- Clenching or grinding your teeth
- Exerting yourself too much
- Holding your head in one position for a long time, like at a computer, microscope, or typewriter
- Poor sleep position



Tension headaches tend to be on both sides of your head. They often start at the back of your head and spread forward. The pain may feel dull or squeezing, like a tight band or vice. Your shoulders, neck, or jaw may feel tight and sore. The pain is usually persistent, but it does not get worse with activity.

Migraine headaches are severe headaches that usually occur with other symptoms such as vision disturbances or nausea. The pain may be described as throbbing, pounding, or pulsating. It tends to begin on one side of your head, although it may spread to both sides.

Other types of headaches:

- Cluster headaches are sharp, very painful headaches that tend to occur several times per day for months and then go away for a similar period of time. They are far less common than other types of headaches.
- Sinus headaches cause pain in the front of your head and face. They are due to inflammation in the sinus passages behind the cheeks, nose, and eyes. The pain tends to be worse when you bend forward and when you first wake up in the morning. Postnasal drip, sore throat, and nasal discharge usually occur with these headaches.

Headaches may occur if you have a cold, the flu, fever, or premenstrual syndrome.

If you are over age 50 and are getting headaches for the first time, a condition called temporal arteritis may be the cause. Symptoms of this condition include vision problems and pain that gets worse when you chew. There is a risk of becoming blind with this condition, so you should get treatment right away.



**See your health care provider soon if:**

- Your headaches wake you up from sleep
- A headache lasts more than a few days
- Headaches are worse in the morning
- You have a history of headaches but they have changed in pattern or intensity
- You have headaches often, and there is no known cause

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003024.htm>

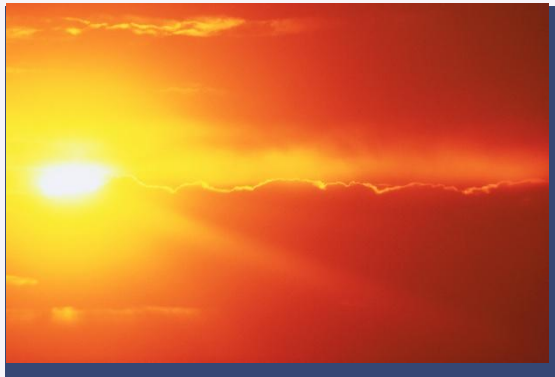
**Please remember to contact the EAP as soon as you become aware of an issue that may warrant counseling. We are here to serve you!**

## Safe Fun in the Sun

Many people love the warm sun. The sun's rays make us feel good, and in the short term, make us look good. But our love affair isn't a two way street: Exposure to sun causes most of the wrinkles and age spots on our faces. Consider this: One woman at age 40 who has protected her skin from the sun

actually has the skin of a 30-year-old!

We often associate a glowing complexion with good health, but skin color obtained from being in the sun – or in a tanning booth – actually accelerates the effects of aging and increases your risk for developing skin cancer.



Sun exposure causes most of the skin changes that we think of as a normal part of aging. Over time, the sun's ultraviolet (UV) light damages the fibers in the skin called elastin. When these fibers breakdown, the skin begins to sag, stretch, and lose its ability to go back into place after stretching. The skin also bruises and tears more easily -- taking longer to heal. So while sun damage to the skin may not be apparent when you're young, it will definitely show later in life.

### How does the sun change my skin?

- Pre-cancerous (actinic keratosis) and cancerous (basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma) skin lesions - caused by loss of the skin's immune function
- Benign tumors
- Fine and coarse wrinkles
- Freckles
- Discolored areas of the skin, called mottled pigmentation;
- Sallowiness -- a yellow discoloration of the skin;
- Telangiectasias -- the dilation of small blood vessels under the skin;
- Elastosis -- the destruction of the elastic tissue causing lines and wrinkles.

Resources: <http://www.sunsafetyalliance.org>  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/sunexposure.html>  
<http://www.webmd.com/healthy-beauty/guide/sun-exposure-skin-cancer>

### Tips to protect yourself:

- Stay out of the sun when it is strongest (between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.)
- Wear clothing that's dark and tightly woven.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- UV rays bounce off sand, snow, concrete, and water.
- Do not use sun tanning beds.
- Keep very young children (6 months or less) out of the sun.
- Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming, perspiring, and toweling off.
- Provide complete sunscreen coverage for your skin (including neck, ears and lips!).
- For people with thin or thinning hair, apply sunscreen to the scalp as well.
- And remember to stay in the shade whenever possible!

Check your skin regularly for changes in the size, shape, color or feel of birthmarks, moles and spots. Such changes are a sign of skin cancer.