What causes headaches - the most common health complaints?

Headaches are commonly caused by tension, allergies (including food allergies), injury, chemical exposure, strong light or odors, eyestrain, lack of sleep, and lack of proper nutrition. Migraine headaches are severe headaches that often are accompanied with nausea and vomiting. These are often one sided headaches, and of a throbbing, piercing nature. Often auras are seen, with visual disturbances reported.

Helpful Hints

- Cool packs can be helpful
- Relaxation, tension reduction, massage may be of benefit
- Standard over the counter medications, such as aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and caffeine may alleviate simple headaches (rebound effects can occur with frequent use. Frequent ibuprofen use may also cause liver problems).
- Stronger medications by prescription available for migraine headaches.

When to call a Health professional

- Headaches that occur with exertions or coughing may be signs of more serious problems
- If a headache occurs accompanied with a stiff and painful neck with fever and nausea and vomiting, meningitis must be ruled out
- Headaches that follow from an infection such as flu, insect bites (mosquito), abdominal pain, or with any nausea and vomiting
- Headaches accompanied by drowsiness, memory problems, or changes in behavior
- Sudden "thunderclap" headaches or very sudden onset
- Headaches with weakness, trauma
- Headache with severely painful eyes