

Do you get headaches? You probably don't need a CT scan or MRI.



Here's why:

- The imaging tests usually don't show why you're having headaches, and they won't ease your pain.
- They have risks, including exposure to radiation.
- They are expensive.

What can you do to feel better? Five easy ideas are on the other side.

Most headaches are caused by tension or are migraines. Here are some steps you can take to feel better:

- 1** Talk to your doctor about what causes your headaches, and then do your best to avoid those things.
- 2** Don't smoke.
- 3** Manage stress. Try meditating, yoga, stretching, or other relaxing activities.
- 4** Get plenty of sleep. Aim for six to eight hours each night.
- 5** Try non-prescription pain relievers like Tylenol®, Advil®, Aleve®, or Excedrin® Extra Strength.

There are still times when you might need a CT scan or MRI. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms, and especially so if your headaches are sudden, different from other headaches you've had, more painful than usual, or if you also have other symptoms like a change in speech or alertness.



An initiative of the ABIM Foundation



With thanks to the American College of Radiology

Learn more at
www.choosingwisely.org/patient-resources

This information is to use when talking with your healthcare provider. It is not a substitute for medical advice and treatment. Use this information at your own risk.

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