

Keeping a Headache Diary Can Help Your Doctor Help You

NHF suggests answering the following questions to compile your headache history:

- When did you start having headaches?
- How often do they occur? At what time of day? During the week or on weekends? How long do they last?
- Where is the pain?
- Which word best describes it: throbbing, pounding, splitting, stabbing, blinding?
- Are your headaches associated with your menstrual cycle?
- What triggers your headache: certain foods, certain physical activities, bright light, strong odors, change in temperature or altitude, noise, smoke, stress, oversleeping?
- What symptoms do you experience prior to the headache?
- Does anyone else in your family suffer from headaches?
- Do you notice visual disturbances before or after your headaches?
- Do you suffer from more than one type of headache?

It is important to make an appointment with your doctor for the specific purpose of addressing your headache history rather than discussing headaches as part of a physician visit for other reasons. The National Headache Foundation also recommends keeping a diary to track the characteristics of your headaches. Patterns identified from your diary may help your doctor determine which type of headache you have and the most beneficial treatments.

For more information about headache causes and treatments, visit the NHF web site at www.headaches.org or call 888-NHF-5552.