**Word count 772**

**2017 05.16 Health Matters**

**Update on Headaches**

**Joe**

**This is Health Matters, with an update on headaches.**

**Taushona**

**Is there anyone who hasn’t had a headache? Like a bruise here and there, like scratches and gashes, or intestinal gas, headaches come with being human**.

**Kristen**

**Headaches are the most common source of pain. In children and in adults. More school days and work days are missed because of headache than for any other reason.**

**Joe**

**Headaches come in two varieties. Primary headaches occur when brain cells, nerves, blood vessels or muscles around the head send pain signals to the brain. Migraines and tension headaches are the most common forms of primary headaches. Secondary headaches do not arise from pain signals in the head. They arise because there is an underlying condition.**

**Taushona**

**Like what? Heart disease? Or Diabetes?**

**Kristen**

**Severe headache can be related to heart disease. But this is fairly rare. Headaches and diabetes, however, go hand in hand. Headache is a common symptom of high blood sugar. And of low blood sugar, for that matter. Headaches caused by highs and lows in blood sugar levels are not in themselves considered harmful. But if you start having frequent headaches, you’ll want to find out if diabetes is the cause. And if you do have diabetes and start having severe headaches, you’ll want to see a doctor. Without delay.**

**Joe**

**Although the condition underlying a headache can be temporary or chronic, most headaches come and go. But there are times when your head feels like it’s splitting open -- or it comes on like a bolt of lightening And over-the-counter pain relievers don’t help at all. That kind of headache is a sure sign you may need to see a doctor. There are three other signs. 1. The headache gets worse when you stand up. 2. It gets worse over time and meds don’t help. And 3. There’s a family history of a condition like diabetes or migraine.**

**Taushona**

**Other conditions can bring on a secondary headache. Like fever or infection. Or an injury. Or hormone fluctuations, such as those associated with the menstrual cycle.**

**Kristen**

**Or eye disorders. Adults are usually fully aware when their vision is off the beam. Children, however, are usually not aware they have a vision problem that might be causing a headache. A child with chronic headaches may need an eye check-up.**

**Joe**

**Another common cause of secondary type headaches is stress. And anxiety. Bad headaches can also be a sign of stroke. Or of a structural abnormality in the brain.**

**Taushona**

**What about dehydration? Isn’t that a cause of headaches?**

**Kristen**

**Yes. And it’s easy to understand why. The brain is 80% water. When brain tissue loses water, it shrinks and actually pulls away from the skull. When this sets off pain receptors surrounding the brain, you get a headache. The brain loses water when your body has lost too much fluid. In other words. When you are dehydrated. Either from sweating or from not taking in enough fluid. Fluid deprivation causes your blood volume to drop and sets the brain shrinkage in motion.**

**Joe**

**And things can get worse. As the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain decreases, blood vessels in the brain dilate. This leads to swelling and inflammation. Which makes the headache more severe.**

**Taushona**

**So you’re saying that when you are dehydrated the brain shrinks and then swells?**

**Joe**

**Something like that. But a dehydration headache is a temporary problem. Even if it becomes so severe it’s debilitating. You need to drink water and you need to rest. Or at least reduce your physical activity for a while.**

**Kristen**

**With summer coming on, staying hydrated is important. But drinking water throughout the day is a good habit to develop year round. And it’s important to encourage children to drink water throughout the day.**

**Taushona**

**Last, and least actually, is the ice cream headache. The short but sometimes excruciating pain that happens when you eat ice cream too fast.**

**Kristen**

**Thus can happen with any ice-cold substance that reaches the back of the mouth and the upper part of the throat. It seems that extreme cold triggers a reflex spasm of blood vessels there. A similar pain can happen in subzero weather.**

**Joe**

**Health Matters is a production of KIDE Hoopa CA.  Produced and written by Cynthia Poten. Engineered by Joseph Orozco.  Our readers were Kristen Marshall, Taushona Moon and Joseph Orozco.  For this audio and more information, visit our download area at  www.kidefm.org. Thank you for listening. Your health adds to the health of our community.**

**Sources and Links**

[**http://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/features/7-pains-you-shouldnt-ignore\**](http://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/features/7-pains-you-shouldnt-ignore%5C)

[**http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/heart-disease-headache-cardiac-**](http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/heart-disease-headache-cardiac-)

**cephalalgia/2016/07/30/id/741321/**

[**http://www.healthline.com/health/diabetes/headache**](http://www.healthline.com/health/diabetes/headache)

[**http://thorzt.com/how-to-identify-a-dehydration-headache/#.WRMyzdQrKt8**](http://thorzt.com/how-to-identify-a-dehydration-headache/#.WRMyzdQrKt8)

***The Best of Health*, Consumer Reports, 2016. Yonkers, NY.**