



Headache cures doctors swear by

Heat, stress and a change in sleep patterns (like the one that comes with the start of school) can trigger headaches for kids. To the rescue: these remedies doctors use on their own children

For DEHYDRATION-INDUCED HEADACHES: WATER + A NECK RUB

“My 5-year-old daughter is very active and doesn’t like to take the time to drink while she plays—especially in the summer,” says Allison Bailey, M.D., founder of Integrated Health and Fitness Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts. “So when she complains of a headache, I first check for signs of dehydration, like excessive thirst and dry lips.” In addition to pouring her daughter a glass of water, Dr. Bailey also gives her a massage. “My daughter calls it the ‘mom massage.’ I rub her scalp, neck and shoulders for 10 minutes, using gentle pressure and a little jojoba oil,” she explains. “The water helps restore fluids while the massage and the oil ease tension.” Dr. Bailey says that her daughter’s pain usually eases within 10 minutes.



For STRESS HEADACHES: VISUALIZATION

“My 12-year-old get a tension headache after a long, hard day,” says father-of-two Lawrence Rosen, M.D., coauthor of *Treatment Alternatives for Children*. “She complains that it feels like there’s a tight rubber band at the front of her head.” To help, Dr. Rosen does guided imagery with her: “I have her close her eyes and deep-belly breathe for 5 minutes. At the same time, I tell her to relax the muscles in her face, head and neck while imagining a relaxing place, like the beach,” he explains. Why it works: The breathing and imagery help relax tense head and neck muscles that cause the pain. “It also helps my daughter develop control over the worries that lead to the muscle tension in the first place,” says Dr. Rosen. “She usually feels better in 15 minutes. Sometimes it actually makes her fall asleep, which is also great for headaches.”

For MIGRAINES: CAFFEINE

“When my middle daughter was 13, she had terrible migraines,” recalls Catherine Marshall, M.D., a pediatrician in Encino, California, and mother of three. To curb her daughter’s pain, Dr. Marshall poured her a cup of coffee, sweetened with plenty of milk and a bit of sugar. “A cup of coffee contains between 95 and 200 mg of caffeine,” she explains. “This constricts blood vessels and pain pathways to the brain, offering relief within 30 to 45 minutes.” ✨

How parents say the family dog keeps kids healthy

