

## HELPING MY HEADACHE



Headache is a very common disorder with up to 15% of Australians taking pain medication for headache at any given time. What causes headache and how to prevent it is a topic of hot debate in medical circles. As with most things, individuals respond to different interventions. Here are a few simple things you can try to help your headache:

### **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER**

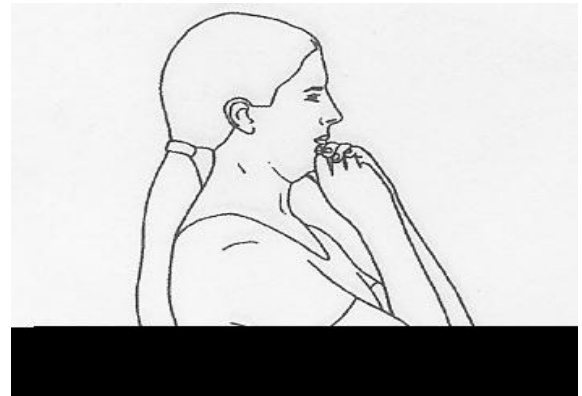
It is important to drink a minimum of 2 litres of water every day to keep yourself hydrated. Dehydration can cause headaches.

### **RELAX**

Tension in the neck, face and jaw can cause or increase headache. Lay down in a quiet place and spend some time focussing on relaxing your neck, face and jaw muscles. Concentrate on your breathing and imagine you are breathing the tension out each time you exhale.

### **THE CERVICAL RETRACTION EXERCISE**

Rest your back against a pillow on the wall. Imagine your head is a drawer in a filing cabinet. Move your head back horizontally ensuring that you do not tilt your chin up or down. Place your hands on your chin and gently press your head back further. Relax your neck muscles in this position and hold for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times with 5-10 second rest in between. This should be repeated every 3-4 hours. Maintaining a good neck posture can often help to reduce headache and neck pain.



### **USE A HEAT PACK**

Place a heat pack around the base of your neck and shoulders. Rest with heat in place for around 20 minutes or until heat pack cools.

### **GENTLE NECK STRETCHES**

Let your left arm rest by your side and tilt your right ear towards your right shoulder. Place your right hand on the side of your head and add some gentle pressure. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times to each side.

