

HEADACHES

This provides suggestions as you engage in shared health care decision-making with Veterans. It is not intended to replace clinical judgement.

Up to 79% of patients reported headache at greater than 4 weeks post-COVID-19³² (NICE, 2022), though this improved with time and 10.6% reported ongoing headaches at 90 days, and 8.4% ≥180 days after symptom onset/hospital discharge.³³ (Fernández-de-Las-Peñas C, 2021)

Things to Keep in Mind

- Consider screening for mental health, substance use disorder, sleep disturbances, traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Neurological examination warranted
- Medication reconciliation
- Consider the following:
 - Pre-COVID-19 episodic migraine now chronic post-COVID-19
 - Delayed onset COVID-19 headache
 - Persistent headache with migraine features onset with COVID-19
 - Sinus congestion
 - Cervical and upper back muscle tightness
 - Increased stress level
 - Medication rebound headache
- Assess pregnancy/lactation status, review teratogenic medications

Evaluation

Labs to Consider

- None

Tests to Consider

- No recommendations for imaging if headache only

PACT Management to Consider

- ICD-10 Code: U09.9, Post-COVID-19 condition, unspecified
- [Treating Headaches Handout for Patients](#)
- Over the counter (OTC) and prescription analgesic review
- Lifestyle management and evaluation (sleep, exercise, nutrition, headache diary)
- Consider Riboflavin 400mg every morning with food
- Consider Magnesium Oxide 420mg every evening
- Regulate glucose levels
- Recommend 64 ounces of water daily
- [Diaphragmatic Breathing](#)

Consults to Consider

- Neurology: if no improvement despite initial management or if abnormal neurological examination present
- Nutrition: to discuss an [anti-inflammatory diet](#) and [headache elimination diet](#)
- Whole Health System approach: biofeedback, mindfulness, health coaching, yoga, acupuncture, Tai Chi
- Chiropractic Care
- Osteopathy

³² NICE <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188/resources/covid19-rapid-guideline-managing-the-longterm-effects-of-covid19-pdf-51035515742>

³³ Fernández-de-Las-Peñas C. Headache as an acute and post-COVID-19 symptom in COVID-19 survivors: A meta-analysis of the current literature. Eur J Neurol. 2021 Nov;28(11):3820-3825. doi: 10.1111/ene.15040.