

Headache awareness for neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1)

This leaflet is for people with NF1 and covers how to reduce headaches. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your NF1 nurse specialists.

How to reduce headaches

Headaches in NF1 are very common. There are simple lifestyle changes you can make to help reduce headaches and migraines.

Relaxation

Reduce stress and anxiety by trying:

- mindfulness
- meditation
- gentle exercise
- deep breathing
- writing a list of your worries before going to bed to clear your thoughts.

Sleep

- Learn healthy regular sleep patterns.
- Too much or too little sleep can cause headaches.
- Try to avoid caffeine after 5pm and alcohol and smoking shortly before going to bed.
- Don't use back-lit devices like televisions, phones, tablets and computers in your bedroom or before you go to bed.

Cut caffeine

- Try to drink fewer than three cups of tea, coffee or cola a day.
- Find decaffeinated alternative options.

Eat regularly

Lack of food can cause headaches:

- aim to have three meals each day at regular times
- aim to drink 6-7 glasses of water a day.

Reduce painkiller use

Overusing painkillers like paracetamol and codeine can cause headaches. Discuss with your specialist or GP and try to reduce your reliance on painkillers.

Useful sources of information

The Migraine Trust: 020 7631 6970
www.migrainetrust.org

Contact us

If you have any queries, please contact the NF department on the following numbers (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday):

Appointments	020 7188 1029
Adult nurses	020 7188 0748/9976
Children's nurse	020 7188 9979

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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