

When the symptom is a headache, finding the right treatment shouldn't be

Focus on migraines and cluster headaches

Headaches, when they are severe and chronic, can be among the most mysterious of health conditions, indicating other conditions or sometimes simply existing as a standalone problem.

Cluster headaches occur in cyclical patterns or clusters, and they are one of the most painful types of headache. A cluster headache commonly awakens you in the middle of the night with intense pain in or around one eye on one side of your head. Bouts of frequent attacks, known as cluster periods, can last for several months, usually followed by remission periods when the headaches subside for many months, and sometimes even years.

A cluster headache strikes quickly, usually without warning, although it is sometimes preceded by migraine-like nausea and sensitivity to light and sound. Common signs and symptoms during a headache include:

- Excruciating pain, generally situated in or around one eye
- Restlessness
- Excessive tearing
- Redness and swelling in your eye on the affected side
- Stuffy or runny nose on the affected side

Other migraine-like symptoms—including sensitivity to light and sound—can occur with a cluster headache, though usually on one side.

A migraine, on the other hand, is usually a severe headache felt as a throbbing pain at the front or side of the head. Some people also have other symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and increased



sensitivity to light or sound. The intensity and severity of migraines often cause misdiagnosis between the two types of headaches.

Cluster headaches are also sometimes confused with sinus headaches, further complicating the diagnosis.

The similarities between cluster headaches and migraines are subtle, but they are enough to make it difficult for your doctor to make a certain diagnosis. That's why patients with severe, debilitating headaches like these should take advantage of the Best Doctors service.

If you have symptoms like the ones mentioned here, seeing your doctor is the first critical step in your treatment. But as you begin the process, you can always count on the Best Doctors service to give you the peace of mind that comes from a definitive, detailed second opinion—taking the headache out of making medical decisions.

The benefit of *removing* the doubt
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