

St. Mark of Ephesus Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Parish Nurse Ministry - December 2020

" The best fast is to patiently endure everything that God sends."

St. Anatoly of Optima

Good strength as my Godmother would say as we go through life's struggles and temptations, as we know in our Orthodox life we have the joy and anticipation of Resurrection. And we have so many situations this year with the pandemic and all the issues and temptations. But hopefully we'll have a vaccination soon and we can get back to some semblance of normalcy.

I know this has been a time of trails and temptations, but if we continue the path our Lord has laid before us He will surely see us to the end. I know a lot of people are suffering from stress and with stress can come headaches, Recently, read some information on headaches that it is one of the most common neuralgic symptoms we experience. Usually effecting younger people more than older people but in this day and age, I'm sure we've all experienced some form, if not physically then psychologically. Headaches may be common but should not be ignored or dismissed as it could signal more dangerous conditions like stroke and now Covid 19. There are more than 200 hundred types of headaches stated Juliette Preston MD asst professor of Neurology at OHSU School of Medicine.

The two most common forms of headaches are tension and migraine. **Tension headaches** are usually mild to moderate usually pain on both sides of the head without any other major symptoms. In a 2008 study it was noted that up to one third of older adults experience at least one headache a year.

Migraines generally involve moderate to severe head pain as well as other symptoms such as sensitivity to light or sound or nausea and temporary problems with cognition.

Another type of headache is call **hypnic headache**, although rare, occurs mostly in older adults and wakes a person up at the same time each night it's called the alarm clock headache it's said a little caffeine before bed can help *but it's always important to check in with your doctor.* With the majority of headaches it's advised to not always reach for the meds right away. Sometimes lifestyle changes can prevent headaches even migraines. **It's said even twenty minutes of aerobic exercise a day can actually decrease migraine frequency.**

For many headache types keeping consistent mealtimes, bedtimes, and wake times can help, also staying hydrated by drinking lots of water. It's also shown that physical therapy can help by addressing tension in the head and neck and shoulders. Other techniques might be acupuncture, biofeedback, cognitive behavioral therapy. Over the counter medicines should be taken with caution, pain relievers such as ibuprofen (Advil), naproxen (Aleve), and aspirin can have side effects such as dizziness cognitive issues and risk of gastrointestinal bleeding. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is safer for older adults. But if you have persistent problems you should contact your physician or neurologist. And as always if you have unusual symptoms please contact your health care providers.

Good fast as we journey to the glorious Feast of our Lord's Nativity!

In Christ,

Elizabeth Ashton RN