

## CHRONIC DAILY HEADACHE

This is defined as headache for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week occurring over a period of at least one month.

It may arise as a progression of primary headache (eg. tension, migraine, cluster headache), from treatable causes such as medication/drug overuse, or less commonly from inflammation (eg. temporal arteritis) or infection.

The incidence of intracranial pathology in chronic headache is approximately 0.1%

## ASSESSMENT

1. Assess as for headache pathway and medication overuse headache pathway on the Health Pathways website
2. Complete a daily headache and medication diary.
3. Mood disorders are common: Consider anxiety, depression, panic disorder, and substance abuse.

## MANAGEMENT

- Identify and treat any underlying causes (primary headache disorders, medication/drug overuse, systemic conditions).
- Request CT head (patient must have *genuine* chronic daily headache)
- If CT negative for intracranial pathology ongoing management rests with the patient and his/her general practitioner (specialist referral is unlikely to provide additional benefit):
  - Consider tricyclic antidepressant
  - Encourage regular daily exercise
  - Optimise other lifestyle factors (sleep, diet, smoking, etc.)

## REFERRAL

Send CT head request to radiology department with clear description of symptoms.

Those not meeting the criteria for chronic daily headache may wish to consider private referral.