This patient fact sheet focuses on non-drug options to help you manage your headaches.

**BASICS:**
- Headaches are the most common symptom following a concussion, also known as mild traumatic brain injury
- You may have new headaches, or a worsening of headaches you had before your concussion
- Most people recover quickly from post-traumatic headaches
- Consult with your health care provider to determine the cause of your headache, and to make a plan for treatment

**HEADACHE TRIGGERS:**
Although each headache is different, identifying common causes (triggers) is important to help you and your provider manage your headaches. Check off any triggers in this list that seem to come before your headache starts:

- Too much sleep
- Too little sleep
- Too much caffeine
- Missing meals
- Muscle tension
- Bright light
- Loud noise
- Warm room temperature
- Emotional stress (anxiety)
- Alcohol
- Certain foods:
- Medicines:
- Physical activities
- Sexual activity
- Straining or coughing
- Bending over
- Weather changes
- Menstrual cycle

**NON-DRUG TREATMENTS:**
Your health care provider may prescribe medicines to help relieve or prevent headaches, however there are many good non-drug options. If you are taking prescribed medications, continue to take them as directed by your health care provider. Discuss these non-drug treatment options with your health care team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>What Can I Do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trouble sleeping</td>
<td>- Remove TV, radio, smartphone, computers, etc., from the bedroom&lt;br&gt;- Try to relax before bed; only use the bedroom for sleep or sex&lt;br&gt;- Go to bed only when tired or sleepy&lt;br&gt;- If you don’t fall asleep in 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy&lt;br&gt;- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark and cool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### These therapies may require a referral from your provider:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type of Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical therapy</td>
<td>Stretching and exercises</td>
<td>Rehabilitation medical provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ice, heat or other therapeutic modalities</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Therapeutic massage of the head and neck areas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive behavior therapy</td>
<td>Ways to evaluate situations and your response; includes relaxation and breathing techniques</td>
<td>Mental health provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acupuncture</td>
<td>Using needles, heat and pressure according to time-honored Chinese practices to reduce pain</td>
<td>Acupuncturist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A headache diary can help you remember information to share with your health provider.

**Sample:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What makes my headache worse?</th>
<th>What makes my headache better?</th>
<th>What time did my headache start?</th>
<th>How long did my headache last?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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### RESOURCES:

Ask your health care team about additional treatment options and contact a DVBIC recovery support specialist for additional resources. Visit http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/locations to find a specialist near you.

**SMARTPHONE APP:**

Concussion Coach is a mobile app for anyone with symptoms of a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury (TBI). This app is intended to support face-to-face treatment with a health care provider and provides portable, convenient tools for the patient to assess symptoms and cope with TBI-related problems. It is not intended to replace professional diagnosis, medical treatment, or rehabilitation therapies. To download the app, scan the QR code on the right (iOS only).

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**Do you have questions about this fact sheet? Feedback? Email info@dvbic.org.**

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