

Referral Guidelines

Headache

Referring provider's initial evaluation and management can include:

- Patients with recurrent headache and a normal neurological exam generally do not require ancillary testing.
- Brain imaging studies (MRI) are considered for patients who have new headaches that awaken them in the middle of the night, patients whose headaches begin shortly after arising from bed in the morning (i.e. positional headache), or for patients whose headaches are associated with transient neurologic deficits (e.g., hemi-paresis, ophthalmoparesis, confusion).

When to initiate referral:

- Patients with a current "worst headache of their life," current headache with focal neurologic deficit or headache with associated papilledema should be referred to the Emergency Department.
- Consider referral if patient has severe disabling recurrent headaches that are not well managed with appropriate use of NSAIDs or other first line headache treatment strategies.

What records can referring provider send?

- Headache calendar indicating the date and time of the day of each headache, the duration of each attack, the severity and description of the attack, treatment provided and the response, and any causative factors (e.g., foods, activities, stressors). At least two months of clinical information charted by the family on the headache calendar is vital.
- A complete list of all medications used to treat headache (both acutely and for prophylaxis) along with a list of other medications taken.

- Copies of medical records regarding past evaluation and treatment of headache.
- Copies of any brain imaging films, EEG reports and relevant laboratory reports.

Children's Colorado's workup will likely include:

- Evaluation by a neurologist, pediatric neurology nurse practitioner or physician's assistant.
- May include neuroimaging, lab tests or referral to other clinics within Neurology including Integrative Headache Clinic.
- Referrals may be recommended for pain management, physical therapy, psychology or biofeedback clinic.

Who to refer to:

- Patients with headaches can be seen by any of our general pediatric neurologists, nurse practitioners or physician assistants.
- **Please call 720-777-6895 to make an appointment.**
- Our neurology staff practices throughout metro Denver and appointments are available at our St. Joseph's, Parker, Broomfield, Littleton and Wheat Ridge locations.
- For patients with hard-to-treat headaches that have been seen by a Neurologist, we offer a multidisciplinary Integrative Headache Clinic.

Want to provide information to your patients and families?

Tell them to visit childrenscolorado.org/Neuro

Contact the Neurology Department

A Children's Hospital Colorado Pediatric Neurologist is available at all times for consultation and can be reached through OneCall at 720-777-3999 or toll free at 800-525-4871 or by calling the Neurology department directly at 720-777-6895, option 2.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 720-777-6895.

Medical Records: Medical records needed for upcoming appointments in Neurology can be faxed to 720-777-7197.

