



Essential Imaging
BC PATIENT SAFETY & QUALITY COUNCIL

CT Scans for Uncomplicated Headache in Adults: A Guide for Essential Imaging

Recommendation: “Imaging is not recommended for uncomplicated headache unless red flags are present.”¹

The BC Patient Safety & Quality Council has put together these Essential Imaging Conversation Guides for Patients to support and guide conversations with care providers based on the *BC Guidelines for Appropriate Imaging*.¹

While a headache can be difficult, you likely do not need a CT scan of your head.²

A headache usually goes away on its own and people tend to recover after a few weeks. You can help avoid complications and encourage recovery by following a few simple tips.



Take Action

Here are some ways that you can take an active role in your recovery:²

- Talk with your care provider to better understand what may be causing your headache.
- Avoid or reduce smoking.
- Manage and control your stress.
- Sleep is key. Aim for 6-8 hours each night.
- Talk about non-prescription pain relievers or muscle relaxers. Take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®).



Stay Informed

Seek medical attention if you experience any of the following:²

- Your headaches are sudden—it may feel like something is bursting in your head
- They are different from your usual headaches
- There is a change in your speech or alertness

Start the Conversation!

Talk with your care provider about appropriate medical imaging.

Learn more and find additional clinical resources at [BCPSQC.ca/imaging](https://bcpsqc.ca/imaging).