



## Headaches and craniofacial neuralgias

Headaches are one of the most common disorders of the nervous system, and the WHO estimates that 47 percent of adults have suffered at least one headache in the last year. Given the complexity of controlling headaches, as the person suffering from these self-medicates, headaches have been underestimated, are poorly diagnosed and inadequately treated. They are quite incapacitating and are usually associated with personal and social problems, like disability, decreased quality of life and economic losses.

### Craniofacial neuralgias.

neuropathic pain is considered one of the worst pains in the world. It is caused by the injury or dysfunction of the nervous system and statistical calculations hold that 1 of every 15,000 persons suffer from neuropathic pain due to different reasons, the most common being trigeminal neuralgias and other facial pains.

### Some key facts

#### Headaches

- 1 There are different types of headaches, due to stress, vascular causes, sympathetic nervous system, cluster, migraines... all of which are incapacitating, cause great amounts of pain in the area.
- 2 Together with trigeminal neuralgia, cluster headaches are, without a doubt, the worst type of headache that exists, suffered by approximately 1 out of every 1,000 people.
- 3 Headaches are usually associated with insomnia and other symptoms that may be classified within anxiety disorders, mood disorders, or are symptoms of depression.
- 4 Cervicogenic headaches are quite common among truck drivers, due to their prolonged contraction of the neck muscles.

#### Craniofacial neuralgias

- 1 They share the same treatment and risks for road safety, derived of the intense pain and psychological implications, in addition to the effects of some drugs.
- 2 The most common craniofacial neuralgia is the trigeminal neuralgia with violent facial pain that is completely incapacitating for any activity.
- 3 There are other neuralgias, like glossopharyngeal neuralgia and Arnold's occipital neuralgia, which result in pain in the pharynx and ear or the occipital area, that are similarly incapacitating.
- 4 Between 12,000 and 15,000 new cases are detected in Spain each year.

### 6 road safety recommendations



Visit your doctor as soon as you suspect any headaches or craniofacial neuralgias,

Symptomatic pain that lasts over 30 minutes, for more than 1 week, and other potentially related physical and psychological symptoms. These require diagnosis and treatment.



Under no circumstances should you drive with pain or with other symptoms related with headaches or migraines or untreated craniofacial algias.

Treatments with analgesics do not usually interfere with driving but, when in crisis, one must wait until these are effective before driving.



Learn to recognize symptoms or prodromes of your headaches,

And if you suspect that you will feel unwell, do not take risks by driving. Take your prescribed medication and ask for help or use public transportation to get home.



For craniofacial algias

Carbamazepine is usually the most effective drug, though this depends on each case. This must always be taken in accordance with one's medical prescription, adhering to the dose and completing the treatment.



Adapt your car so that it is comfortable for you,

Properly adjust the seat and backrest to the appropriate height and distance from the steering wheel, position the headrest and rear-view mirrors correctly to keep from forcing the neck.



Analyze your personal situation and try to detect the cause of your headache,

It might be possible for you to find a solution without abusing medication, as in addition to pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy is also effective.