

PAIN IN THE HEAD

Sudden headaches troubling you? The change in season might be to blame

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If you have noticed an increase in the frequency of headaches you seem to be suffering from of late, you are not alone. "Sudden drop in the temperature and change in humidity, coupled with more time spent indoors, where the air is dry, can lead to headaches. The reason is that when the cooler air hits the trigeminal nerve (the nerve that provides sensory information to the face, head, mouth, throat and neck), blood vessels in the brain constrict, leading to a headache," explains Dr Neeta Shah, HOD, neurology department at the Nanavati Super Speciality Hospital, Vile Parle (W). "While it is

true that cold-induced headaches are more common in people suffering from migraines, that doesn't mean they can't strike just about anyone," she adds. Check out what else causes headaches during winter:

Getting enough vitamin D?

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin produced when ultraviolet rays from sunlight hit the skin and trigger vitamin D synthesis by the liver and kidneys. Low vitamin D levels have been linked to

depression and headaches. Limited exposure to sunlight can lead to vitamin D deficiency. According to research presented at the 50th Annual Meeting of the American Headache Society, nearly 42 per cent of patients with chronic migraines have vitamin D deficiency. So, make sure you bask in sunshine every day.

Anti-headache diet

Skipping meals is a surefire way of triggering a headache. "Also,

up your intake of good-quality protein (dairy, fish, nuts) and nutrients that boost the immunity (greens, legumes and fruits), as low immunity leads to frequent colds, and bad headaches are usually part of cold and flu," informs Dr Samrat Dinesh Shah, consultant physician, Cumballa Hill Hospital and Heart Institute, Kemp's Corner.

Avoiding dehydration

The chances of

dehydration in winter are high. Just because the temperature has dropped doesn't mean that your

again, can lead to headaches. "Our brain composition is more than 75 per cent water, and it is very sensitive to the amount of water available to it. When it is dehydrated, it produces histamines to retain water, which may lead to headaches and general fatigue," explains Dr Shah. A study published in 2012 in the journal, American Society For Nutrition, also found that the lack of water causes fatigue, headaches, and makes concentrating difficult. So, it is important to drink at least eight glasses of water every day.

WHAT HELPS



- Get a humidifier installed at your workplace and home to prevent the air from getting too dry.
- Wear a hat or a cap when heading out to prevent direct exposure to cold air.
- To ease a headache, put pressure on the nerve just under the eyebrows. This provides relief as doing this causes the pituitary gland to release pain-killing endorphins.

