Headaches, Analgesic Rebound
National Headache Foundation, NHF

Analgesic agents are prescription or over-the-counter medications. They are used to control pain. This includes migraine and other types of headaches. When used on a daily or near daily basis, these analgesics can help continue (*perpetuate*) the headache process. They may lessen the pain for a few hours. But they appear to feed into the pain system in such a way that long lasting (*chronic*) headaches may result. When this happens, the patient must completely stop using these analgesics. If not, the chronic headache is likely to continue to be as forceful as before, despite any other treatment used.

Usually when you stop taking analgesics, the headache may get worse for several days. Also, the sufferer may have nausea or vomiting. But, after a period of three to five days, these symptoms begin to improve. Sometimes improvement may take longer. For those patients willing to continue treatment, the headaches will slowly get better with the right medications. Most patients are able to stop the use of analgesics at home under a caregiver's supervision. But some find it difficult. Many sufferers have been using analgesics several times a day for many years. They may require hospitalization.

Information courtesy of the National Headache Foundation

Document Released: 03/09/2005 Document Re-Released: 09/26/2009
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.