



## **NATIONAL HEADACHE FOUNDATION**

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### **ANALGESIC REBOUND HEADACHES**

Analgesic agents are prescription or over-the-counter medications used to control pain including migraine and other types of headaches. When used on a daily or near daily basis, these analgesics can perpetuate the headache process. They may decrease the intensity of the pain for a few hours; however they appear to feed into the pain system in such a way that chronic headaches may result. If under these circumstances the patient does not completely stop using these analgesics, despite any other treatment undertaken, the chronic headache is likely to continue unabated.

Usually when analgesics are discontinued the headache may get worse for several days and the sufferer may experience nausea or vomiting. However, after a period of three to five days, sometimes longer, these symptoms begin to improve. For those patients willing to persevere, the headaches will gradually improve as response to more appropriate medication occurs. Most patients are able to stop the use of analgesics at home under physician supervision, but some find it difficult and may require hospitalization, as many sufferers have been using analgesics several times a day for many years.