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# Hemicrania Continua

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

## Source

*National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Hemicrania Continua Information Page](#).*

Hemicrania continua is a chronic and persistent form of headache marked by continuous pain that varies in severity, always occurs on the same side of the face and head, and is superimposed with additional debilitating symptoms on the continuous but fluctuating pain are occasional attacks of more severe pain. A small percentage of individuals with hemicrania continua have bilateral pain, or pain on both sides of the head. A headache is considered hemicrania continua if the person has had a one-sided daily or continuous headache of moderate intensity with occasional short, piercing head pain for more than 3 months without shifting sides or pain-free periods. The headache must also be completely responsive to treatment with the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug drug indomethacin. It must have at least one of the following symptoms: eye redness and/or tearing, nasal congestion and/or runny nose, ptosis (drooping eyelid) and miosis (contracture of the iris). Occasionally, individuals will also have forehead sweating and migraine symptoms, such as throbbing pain, nausea and/or vomiting, or sensitivity to light and sound. The disorder has two forms: chronic, with daily headaches, and remitting, in which headaches may occur for a period as long as 6 months and are followed by a pain-free period of weeks to months until the pain returns. Most patients experience attacks of increased pain three to five times per 24-hour cycle. This disorder is more common in women than in men. Physical exertion and alcohol use may increase the severity of headache pain in some patients. The cause of this disorder is unknown.