



# The GW Medical Faculty Associates Headache Center

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**The GW Medical Faculty Associates Headache Center was established in July 2015 to fulfill two primary objectives:**

1. To provide citizens of the region with expert consultative care in the area of headache medicine
2. To raise the existing standard of care for headache through research.

## Approach to Headache Management

In treating patients with headache-and migraine headache in particular- the GW Headache Center is dedicated to the proposition that patients who take an active role in managing their headache disorder will experience a more favorable clinical outcome than patients who abdicate responsibility for management to the health care provider (HCP). Thus the Center places a strong emphasis on patient education, and from the initial visit onward patients are provided with a variety of educational aids to assist them in understanding the origin of their headaches and how their headache burden may be most effectively reduced. While the Center's provider is always available to serve as "navigator" and, specifically, to explain the various management options available, treatment itself is a "two-way street": a therapeutic alliance in which the patient is an active participant.

## New Patients

Patients who come to the Center's clinics receive a thorough evaluation by neurology providers who have been trained specifically in the field of headache medicine, and each patient is provided with a specific diagnosis and a management plan that is tailored to his/her particular needs.

## Established Patients

Patients who have been evaluated at the Center and are having difficulties despite following the management plan designed for them are advised to contact the Center to request assistance. If the patient's problem cannot be managed by email or phone, he/she will be scheduled for prompt clinic follow-up and a face-to-face evaluation.

## Providers Referring to the Center

1. Physicians and other HCPs who refer a patient to the Headache Center's clinics for evaluation will receive an electronic communication from the Center provider who personally evaluated the patient, and that communication will contain both the provider's clinical impression and a detailed management plan.
2. Patients referred to the Center's clinics can be managed in one of two ways: (1) a one-time consultation, wherein a detailed management plan is outlined for the referring HCP, or (2) total comprehensive and continued care for the patient's headache disorder is assumed by the Center.
3. Referring providers should specify which option they prefer.
4. Patients referred to the Center's clinics who are eligible for participation in an ongoing clinical research trial and choose to participate will be followed closely by the Center's providers and research staff for the duration of the study and seen regularly at the GW Headache Research Center, in the Center's clinics or both. Such follow-up will be conducted in parallel with any care provided by the referring HCP, and that provider will receive regular updates as to the patient's clinical status while enrolled in the research study.
5. If a patient who was referred to the Center does poorly from the headache standpoint despite implementation of the recommended management plan, the patient's primary care provider (or the provider who initially referred the patient) is encouraged to refer the patient back to the Center for repeat evaluation.

*Amanda Michael, M.D.*

*John F. Rothrock, M.D.*

*Co-Directors, The GW Medical Faculty Associates Headache Center*