



# Cluster headache overview

## Facts and Figures

Cluster headache has a prevalence of about 0.1%

The peak age of onset is in 30s and 40s

The disorder is four times more common in men

Cluster headache sufferers are often smokers

## What causes cluster headache?

The causes of cluster headache are not fully understood.

There is some evidence to suggest a role for the hypothalamus area of the brain.

Various chemical changes such as in histamine and serotonin may occur

Genetic factors may sometimes be involved. For example having a first-degree relative with cluster headache increases the risk 14- to 39-times.

Disturbed circadian rhythms may also be important because headaches often begin during sleep

A cluster headache attack involves activation of the **trigeminal** system (which supplies the front of the face with pain sensation) and the **autonomic** system (which causes involuntary reactions such as watering from the eye and nose)

Cluster Headache is therefore classified as a trigeminal-autonomic headache disorder.

There are 3 other trigeminal-autonomic headache disorders (Paroxysmal hemicrania, SUNCT/SUNA and Hemicrania continua)