



Ice Cream Pain - How can eating ice cream give you a pain in the head?

Fact

- Doctors think that the pain you can get at the front of your head while eating ice cream has something to do with the nerves in the top of your mouth.
- Nerves are like the body's telephone lines. They send messages from one end of your body to another.
- The nerves at the top of your mouth are quite sensitive to cold things (like ice cream)
- Doctors think that when the nerves in the top of your mouth send messages saying, "Wow this ice cream is cold!" the blood vessels in your forehead tighten up and that's what gives you the pain.

Do you know

- Ice cream headaches usually only last for a few seconds
- The best way to get rid of an ice cream headache is take the ice cream away from the roof of your mouth!
- Your body has millions of nerve sensors all over it and some are more sensitive than others
- There are even nerves inside your teeth that are very sensitive.

Experiments you can do

Give yourself a pain in the head

You can experiment with ice cream or something else that's frozen like an ice block or even crushed ice.

What you do:

Hold the ice or ice cream in your mouth against the top of your mouth for about 30 seconds. Get someone to time this for you. You might not even have to do it for that long before you get a sharp pain in your forehead above your eyebrows. When you feel the pain take away the ice or ice cream and see how long the cold headache lasts for. It will usually only frozen things give you that ice cream headache? Try ice, ice blocks, frozen peas or beans (but maybe not that frozen steak!)

Other Investigations

Does the ice cream headache happen all year?

Try the ice cream headache experiment at different times of the year. It can work really well on a hot summer's day but how about on a cold winters one?

Jokes

What did the forehead say to the ice cream? Stop being a pain!