Recommendations for MRI in Headache

Child Neurology Division at Children’s National Medical Center

• Headaches for less than 6 months duration not responding to lifestyle changes and first line medications
• Headaches associated with abnormal neurologic exam findings, especially papilledema, nystagmus, gait or motor changes
• Absent family history of headache
• Headaches associated with substantial confusion or emesis
• Headaches that awaken a child from sleep repeatedly
• A family history or disorders that predispose child to central nervous system lesions such as brain tumors or cerebral aneurysms

Adapted from Medina S, Pinter JD, Zurakowski D, et al. Radiology 1997;202:819–24