

HEADACHES: A NEW PRESCRIPTION



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Throbbing, burrowing, bursting, drawing, wandering, dull, pressing, sharp, gnawing, jarring, burrowing, burning pain. These words are often used to describe headaches

A headache is something most have suffered from. They range in intensity from mild discomfort to debilitating. Most people who suffer from headaches keep an array of medications around to deal with them. Headaches can be broadly organized into 2 groups, muscle or tension headaches, and cluster headaches and migraines

A muscle contraction headache is commonly referred to as a tension headache. The pain in this headache arises from the tensing of muscles of the upper back, neck and shoulders. The cause of the tension can be both physical and emotional e.g. tension at work and extreme cold or poor posture, rest and massage are very effective. Relaxation exercises like the tennis ball at the neck, and the chair exercise are very helpful. Exercise is amazing for relieving tension. Changing the source of the tension is most beneficial.

Migraine headaches result from specific changes in the blood vessels of the head and brain. The blood vessels first constrict then widen abnormally. Migraine symptoms are related to this physiological process. The constriction leads to the malfunction in the effected area which causes the typical aura or warning symptoms. The restoration of normal blood flow to the area inflames and stretches the vessels which over stimulates the hypersensitive nerve endings in the vessel walls. The pain is intense and throbbing and usually one sided at the start. Migraines usually have psychological causes, yet characteristically occur after the stress is relived. There tends to be a family history.

Certain types of vascular headaches are called cluster headaches. These are severe, one sided and occur in spells, often when asleep. A key symptom is redness of the eyes with tearing. There is congestion and throbbing. Heat at the feet often relieves some of the vascular congestion.

Headaches can be caused by coffee, from exposure to the elements, allergies to food additives and environmental irritants are a common cause. Stomachs and constipation have been known to cause problems. Not uncommon are headaches from physical injury (trauma), TMJ and teeth grinding are another common cause. Very often headaches are caused from stress and anxiety at work or home. Dehydration is another frequent reason. Extreme circumstances like anemia, tumors, hypertension, hypoglycemia, and sinusitis, toxic doses of VitA or Vit B deficiencies can also be the cause.

A natural approach to the treatment of headaches begins with diet. Certain foods seem to trigger more headaches than others. Foods that contain Sulphates and Nitrates as well as fermented foods are the usual culprits. Try eliminating tyramine and amino acid phenylalaine. Reintroduce these foods one at a time to see if they induce a headache. Phenylalaine is found in Aspartame (Equal, NutraSweet) MSG and Nitrates (hot dogs and lunch meat). Tyramine is found in foods like alcohol, bananas, cheese, chicken and chocolate, citrus, herring, onions, peanut butter, smoked fish sour cream, wine and fresh baked products. Also by neutralizing the acid/alkalinity scale the body has the best chance of eliminating toxins which may contributrute to headaches as well as reestablishing healthy digestive function.

When coping with a tendency toward headaches alternative therapies such as Homeopathy, Herbs, and Acupuncture can be very effective. These therapies generally work best under supervised constitutional care.

Headache sufferers each have their own unique type of headache and their own measures which help relieve their symptoms. This is the focus of alternative treatments for a headache. Where does your headache start? On the side, in the frontal lobes, in your eyes? Is it a pressing pain like a vice or an explosive one? Do you feel as if a nail is being driven into your head or maybe someone is playing with tiny hammers on your skull? Homeopathy generally functions best when the acute remedies (mentioned below) are related in their prescribing to a constitutional prescription, and generally are more effective under supervised care. Ask your Homeopath.

Certain remedies can be tried acutely e.g.:

- Belladonna, for suddenness of onset and pain temple to temple
- Nat Mur for tension or periodic headaches with the vomiting of water brash and hammer like pains
- Sangunaria for sharp, splitting headaches relieved by vomiting
- Bryonia for pain worse from any movement, a pain as if the head would burst
- Nux Vomica for congestive pain or headaches due to overindulgence
- Ars Alb or Kali Bich for sinus drainage

An easy and tasty tea can accompany these prescriptions and are available from most herbalists. Use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of each herb: Mint, Willow, Liquorices, Meadowsweet, Skullcap and Chamomile. Add a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of feverfew - be careful, it's bitter.

A tincture of feverfew can also be taken daily instead if preferred.

Bowen is used locally and treats headaches constitutionally. Correcting the physical imbalances both skeletal and neurological in the body affects the entire structure as well as the hormonal, circulatory, digestive and lymphatic systems. The body is shown it's perfect template and in recovery tries to emulate this.

When treating headaches, the spine, cervical through lumbar areas, the shoulders as well as the TMJ are realigned. This process re-establishes the body's proper biomechanical function. This reduces the frequency and intensity of most headaches.