



Patient Newsletter January 2000

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Put down your aspirin bottle. Recurring headache pain is not normal! Popping painkillers should not be a part of everyday life. Chiropractic can help if you know a few simple things about America's most common ailment.

Headaches a Real Pain? Here's the Scoop on How Chiropractic Can Take Away the Pain.

Does headache pain periodically knock you for a loop? Do you believe chronic pain is something you “just have to live with?” Do you wonder what holistic treatment options are out there and which are right for me?

Dear Friend and Patient,

For too many Americans headache pain is one of those things that come along with job, family and daily stress. How we treat headaches is another issue. If you've bought into the popular notion that the best way to solve every ache and pain is to reach for the nearest NSAID—the fancy name for nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like aspirin, ibuprofen, ketoprofen, and naxoprofen sodium, then you only know what the pharmaceutical giants want you to know.

As my patient and a believer in chiropractic, you undoubtedly know that non-synthetic treatments should not be overlooked. Safe, non-pharmaceutical treatments do indeed exist and your chiropractor can be your conduit to these natural solutions.

This issue is a primer on headache pain. Inside you'll find information on the root causes of headache pain, the three major types of headaches—tension, cluster and migraine, as well some potential lifesaving information on what you can do to take away the pain. Finally, like always, sprinkled in is some advice on how regular chiropractic care can relieve or eliminate this everyday ache and pain from your life.

After you read this issue, save it or share it with a friend. I bet the next time you have a headache you'll wish you could remember everything you read here. It might just save you a trip to the pharmacy.

So, thanks for reading our publication. We hope you find it informational.

Test Your Knowledge of Headaches

True or False (answers below):

1. Tension headaches, which most people get at some time, develop when tense muscles in the head and neck irritate nerve endings.
2. Most headaches can be treated at home with over-the-counter pain relievers; they don't require a trip to the doctor.
3. If you are prone to migraines, there's nothing you can do to prevent them.
4. Cluster headaches are so named because they tend to occur in clusters over the course of a period from several hours to several weeks.
5. Painkillers, taken on a regular basis, may actually worsen headaches.

(1. True. 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. True.)

Survey courtesy of Onhealth.com, an independent service that provides valuable ideas and inspiration about wellness, health and medicine. Onhealth Network Co. is a consumer health information company based in Seattle.

What Exactly Is a Headache Anyway?

Believe it or not, coming up with one uniform definition of headache is rather difficult. There are actually more than twenty kinds of headaches and migraines alone have five subvarieties! In fact, try as I might, I could not come up with a solid definition of headache that fit across the board.

What I can report is that headache afflicts more than 90 percent of us at some time each year according to the aptly named ACHE, a.k.a. the American Council for Headache Education. The best way to explain a headache is to look at the major types of headaches and what causes them.

Headaches are best categorized according to their underlying causes.



HEADACHE #1: TENSION

We've all heard the TV commercials. You'd think tension headaches were as common as apple pie and motherhood. Everyone gets them. Right? Yes, everyone gets them, *but that shouldn't make them an accepted part of everyday life.*

Tension headaches are simply the dull, non throbbing pain that feels like your head is being squeezed in a vice. The muscles in your neck may feel tight or knotted and your head hurts. *Nerve endings in the head and neck irritated by taut muscles is the chief source of tension headaches.* According to Johns Hopkins, there are two types of tension headaches: *episodic* (headaches that occur less than 15 times per month) and *chronic* (headaches that occur 15 or more times per month).

Tension headaches are common, non-specific headaches that are not caused by underlying disease . . . they affect 40% of the population at some time.

Johns Hopkins Health, 1999

What can you do? As a believer in the importance of regular chiropractic care, your first solution should *not* be a trip to the medicine cabinet for a couple of Advil[®] tablets. An adjustment from your friendly, neighborhood chiropractor can do wonders to take away the pain and more importantly, loosen the tightened muscles that triggered the event in the first place.

Pills have their place. Don't get me wrong. Aspirin, Advil , Tylenol[®], or whatever pain reliever you prefer all work great and have their place in modern health care. But think about this, if tension headaches have become a regular part of your life, then you may need to see a doctor. Remember, there are other treatments at your disposal that your chiropractor as a member of health care team can recommend—spinal adjustments, massage, relaxation techniques, and herbal remedies to name a few.

To help prevent tension headaches, Johns Hopkins suggests these healthy lifestyle approaches: Maintain good posture to prevent muscle cramps and get regular exercise—especially aerobic exercise such as running or cycling.

Last word. Don't just treat the symptoms, and don't settle for purely pharmaceutical solutions. Call your chiropractor. After all, if a natural or holistic health care remedy can solve the problem, why pop a pill?

✓ **HEADACHE #1: CLUSTER**

“Excruciating”, “sharp” or “burning” are but a few of the words used to describe this common, though less well known type of headache with the pain generally located behind or around one eye. Not pleasant.

Fortunately, cluster headaches are relatively short-lived—beginning abruptly and lasting only between 30 and 45 minutes. This may seem like a minor pain, but to the sufferer 30 to 45 minutes can be an eternity.

About 80 to 97 percent of cluster headache sufferers have episodic headaches . . . they get these headaches at the same time every

day for one to three months The headaches then disappear for months or years.

Johns Hopkins Health, 1999

According to Johns Hopkins, the remaining 3 to 20 percent have chronic headaches that occur daily for at least 12 months. Even worse. The problem affects six times more men than women.

Symptoms:

- ✓ *Intense one-sided pain*
- ✓ *Sudden onset*
- ✓ *Brief duration*
- ✓ *Localize pain around one eye*
- ✓ *Swollen, watery eye*
- ✓ *Pain occurrence at specific times*

What can you do? Cluster headaches are not something to ignore. You need to consult your health care team—your physician and chiropractor. Prescribed medications can help reduce the frequency and severity of cluster headache. But don't forget that a healthy body begins with a healthy spine and that's where chiropractic can help. Call your chiropractor.

Even if your primary course of treatment is your medical doctor, it is still recommended that you at least try chiropractic. *Some clients report that headache pain is lessened or disappears with regular chiropractic adjustments.* What do you have to lose? With the ever-escalating prices for prescription drugs, chiropractic can be a cost effective, natural treatment for this menacing problem. Call me and let's discuss how chiropractic might be of help to you.

Helping your body heal itself is what chiropractic care is all about.

HEADACHE #3: MIGRAINES

Practically everyone knows someone who suffers from migraine headaches. But what are migraines and why are they so debilitating and feared?

240 million people worldwide suffer from migraine headaches.

Onhealth.com, 1999

According to Johns Hopkins, migraines are severe, recurring headaches that are often accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light and noise. Doctors used to believe that a migraine resulted when blood vessels in the head constricted (narrowed) and dilated (widened).

Current theory suggests that the nerve fibers in the brain stem release proteins into the blood circulation of the back of the head inducing inflammation of the blood vessels. This inflammation results in the pain we know as migraines.

a visual shimmering haze of bright jagged lines. Do you experience confusion? Do you suffer from temporary speech impediments? Do you feel tingling or numbness anywhere in your arms, legs or face? Do you suffer from mood swings or food cravings prior to the onset of a headache?

Prevention and treatment. Chiropractors believe that there's always something natural that we can do to treat ourselves. Here's five easy things Johns Hopkins recommends you do if migraine pain is a part of your life.

1. ***Take a pain reliever.*** *Migraines are a clear-cut case of where pain relievers can be very effective, but I recommend that you also call your chiropractor. Pain relief pills have their place in modern medicine, but should not be the only remedy or treatment option explored.*
2. ***Avoid those factors identified in the list above that may contribute to the development of a migraine.*** *It seems like commonsense, but if you suffer from migraine pain I recommend that you discuss the environmental factors in the list with the members of your total health care team. You never know when something overlooked will become apparent and chiropractors are noted for having a unique perspective on pain management.*

3. **Look for ways to change your lifestyle.** *Changes in diet, environment, stress or exercise may reduce migraine frequency. Chiropractic care is as much talking about your symptoms and establishing the root cause, as actual treatment. Chiropractors are uniquely qualified help you assess your lifestyle and make preventative recommendations.*
4. **Get some aerobic exercise (walking, cycling, jogging, running, etc.).** *It's not only good for your heart, but aerobic exercise increases the brain's production of endorphins and that's important. These natural chemicals in the body may reduce pain and enhance mood. Johns Hopkins goes so far as to suggest that regular exercise, three times a week for 20 to 30 minutes may keep migraines away altogether. Your chiropractor can be great resource for those considering an exercise regimen to help relieve their pain. As with any exercise regimen, you should consult your physician before beginning.*

Today, as in 1990, most people who use alternative therapies for specific medical conditions use them for chronic conditions such as backache, anxiety, arthritis and headaches.

A 1997, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center survey of 2,055 adults

5. **Consider biofeedback.** *Biofeedback is a method in which people learn to control body functions with their mind. It may sound far-fetched, but for some this method may be a good, non-pharmaceutical solution to the problem. Training in relaxation techniques is another option.*

NEWS FLASH!

Caution! Limit the Use of Painkillers

Although they can be effective against headaches when used on a temporary basis, painkillers—especially those containing caffeine or codeine—should not be taken over long periods of time. Studies show that the constant use of painkillers may have a rebound effect—actually causing headaches—or can block other medications, such as prophylactic drugs, that you may be taking on a regular basis to prevent migraine headaches. Dependence on painkillers may also hamper the effectiveness of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. It also seems that dependence on painkillers may permanently alter the pain-control pathways in the brain and spinal cord.

Onhealth.com, July 1999

don't get me wrong. I am not advocating that if you suffer from any of the three types of headaches discussed in this issue that you should toss out your prescription medication. What I am suggesting is that if you have suffer from headache pain, discuss it with your chiropractor.

If I have said it once, I have said it a hundred times.

Chiropractors are the only healing professionals specifically trained to analyze and correct spinal nerve stress.

Call your chiropractor if you or any member of your family is living with headache pain. **When your body speaks to you, it's telling you that something is wrong.** Heed the warning and don't be like so many people who settle for the vitality-sapping, life-draining pain as part of normal day-to-day life.

Pain is not normal and the importance of regular spinal adjustment for headache pain (or other pain) is not simply an unsubstantiated claim. Independent researchers and conventional medical practitioners have recognized the relationship between the spinal column and headache pain. Have you?

Best wishes for the new millenium. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott E. Olney

**A VERY SPECIAL Thanks
FOR READERS OF THIS NEWSLETTER !**

I consider it a privilege to be trusted with the health care of my patients. In fact, there are some weeks we are so busy we have to extend our hours just to see everyone! Why have we grown so fast? It is because of patients like you who refer friends, family, and co-workers. I often don't have a chance to say thanks for all your support and friendship.