

# Is Your Head On Straight?

Headaches are the #1 rated health complaint in America, surpassing even the common cold. There are an estimated 50 million chronic headache sufferers in the United States alone. Headaches generate 157 million lost days from work, more than \$50 billion in medical bills and \$4 billion in over the counter medications. I was a headache sufferer and they were debilitating. I tried everything, saw every doctor and nothing worked. I thought I was crazy, and the doctors insinuated it. If I hadn't found relief, I don't know where I would be today...

## THERE ARE 3 MAJOR TYPES OF HEADACHES:

- 1) Migraine
- 2) Tension / Chronic
- 3) Trauma induced

Each type differ by their symptoms and what triggers them, but muscle spasm, nervous tension and change in blood flow are common to all three types.

## MIGRAINE HEADACHES

58% of migraines require immediate bed rest. 25% of migraine sufferers have four attacks a month. Migraines usually begin during adolescence, but occur most frequently between the ages of 35-45. Migraine headaches are hereditary for 70% of sufferers. When a migraine headache begins, serotonin levels rise and then dramatically fall. 20% of sufferers will experience a visual disturbance called an aura which is a flash of light seen in the field of vision. Some also experience numbness or difficulty speaking. Blood flow to the brain is determined by the diameter of a blood vessel. During a migraine headache, which is a vascular condition, arteries constrict decreasing the amount of blood flow to the brain.

## SYMPTOMS:

- Sharp pounding pain
- Often on one side of the head
- Visual disturbances
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Sensitivity to light and sound

## TRIGGERS:

- Stress, anxiety, depression or excitement
- Hormonal changes
- Food allergies to cheese, chocolate, alcohol, cured meats and sweets
- Bright or flickering lights

- Skipping meals
- Weather changes

## TENSION HEADACHES

Tension headaches are the most common type of headaches. Tension headaches are usually caused by spasm of the muscles in the back of the neck or head. The swelling from muscle spasm decreases blood flow to the brain by choking nerves. Tension headaches produce constant pain on both sides of the head. Pain lasts anywhere from several hours to several days or months. If tension headaches occur regularly over a period of years, they are considered chronic headaches.

## SYMPTOMS:

- Dull pain in the forehead
- Pain in the temples
- Pain in a wide band across the head
- Usually both sides of the head

## TRIGGERS:

- Stress
- Fatigue
- Muscle strain
- Eye strain
- Anxiety
- Menstruation

## TRAUMA INDUCED HEADACHES

This type of headache is directly associated with injury to the head, face, neck or spine. Trauma headaches are associated with pain in the neck or shoulders. Auto accidents are the major cause of these headaches and can start weeks or months after the accident. The average American living in a metropolitan area can expect to be involved in 7 or 8 car accidents in their lifetime. If you live in New Jersey, this number goes up.

## SYMPTOMS:

- Sensation of tightness, throbbing or constriction
- Often a tight band of pressure over the entire head

## TRIGGERS:

- Auto accidents
- Sport injuries
- Falls
- Other traumatic injuries

## WHAT NOT TO DO:

Do you know what the #1 reason for admittance to the hospital from the Emergency

Room is? Overdose to Tylenol! No kidding... In fact, recent Tylenol commercials warn viewers that the makers of Tylenol prefer you not take their product at all than have you take incorrectly. When is the right time to take Tylenol? 3-4 times a year not 3-4 times a day! Tylenol is a pain reliever meant for times when you overexert yourself playing sports, times when you go too long without a meal, were in front of the computer screen too long, or were horsing around with the kids. "Doctors have known for years that chronic pain sufferers who regularly take Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs like Ibuprofen to ease their symptoms are prone to gastric disorders. There's an epidemic of adverse drug reactions to NSAIDs," says Dr. James Fries, one of the country's leading arthritis experts and a professor of medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine.

Imagine you are in a deep sleep tonight but you are abruptly awakened by a ringing fire alarm. All you want to do is go back asleep, but instead, you decide to investigate by walking thru the house making sure that there is no fire. You don't want your house to burn down, or do you?!

People who get headaches on a daily basis who just cover up their pain with NSAID are just knocking the fire alarm out of the ceiling and going back to bed. They may have a fire in the house! Frequent headaches are your body's way of telling you that something is wrong and needs to be fixed. Don't ignore the signals!

## WHAT TO DO:

How did I get rid of my headaches? At my worst, I was getting debilitating migraines 3-4 times a week. I saw the school nurse so much, the she started to suspect that I had a social disorder or learning disability or that I just didn't want to be in class. The doctors, who found nothing wrong with me, thought that I might have some psychiatric problems. I was desperate. My parents didn't know what to do. They knew some friends of friends who were husband and wife chiropractors in Middletown. They had urged my parents to bring me in. We didn't get it. What were Chiropractors going to do to help my headaches? I went during one of my worst episodes. Nauseous and almost incoherent, I stumbled into their office. My eyes opened up and the nausea resolved. I left without my headache. Thru regular treatments, and correction of the

misaligned vertebrae in my Cervical Spine, the vessels leading to my brain were no longer choked and throbbing.

A study of 47 patients was done to see if the Cervical Spine played a role in headaches. 97% of all subjects tested showed at least 1 significant abnormality on x-ray of the Cervical Spine. Like a kink in a garden hose that reduces the amount of water passing thru, the throbbing of a headache is due to the constriction of a vessel. It is blood trying to get thru a narrower opening. It's like a car accident on the Garden State Parkway causing a "bottleneck" where traffic backs up. Spinal misalignment, causes the choking of the nerves exiting the spinal column and also results in muscle spasm in the surrounding area. This muscle spasm restricts normal range of motion. When force movement thru the restriction, like when turning your head to pull out of a parking spot, vertebrae pop out of position causing the choking of surrounding nerves.

At Garden State Spine & Pain Institute, we take pride in relieving and resolving headaches for our patients. The reduction of muscle spasm thru stretching and deep tissue massage provided in physical therapy, combined with the correction of misaligned vertebrae in Chiropractic removes pressure on the surround vessels easing the throbbing of headaches and prevents them from coming back. We also provide stress reduction techniques like Yoga, Tai Chi, and massage. If I was you, and I WAS, I would call and schedule an appointment. It may change your life! ■  
— Dr. Raj Gupta



*We ARE the Doctors  
You've been Aching for!*

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