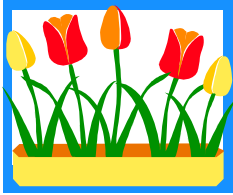


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Headaches

Back to Health
 Chiropractic

www.back2health4you.com
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Chiropractic and Headaches

• What is the difference between a Tension Headache and a Migraine?

- It's generally a migraine when the head feels like it's going to burst. There is a deep throbbing pain localized on either one side of the head or the other. The patient usually can't stand light or noise. Nausea and impaired vision are common. Attacks are frequent and can last as long as a few hours to a few days. They are often set off by restriction too much diet, caffeine or smoking. When a misalignment causes rigidity, the out of position vertebrae puts pressure on one or more nerves. As a result, the blood flow to the head is reduced. To compensate the blood vessels in the head expand thus irritating surrounding nerves = throbbing migraine.
- The pain of a **tension headache** is distinctly different. It's a dull, steady pain that grips the entire head. There is usually stiffness in the neck and tension between the shoulder blades. Attacks are often triggered by stress or fatigue. They occur frequently and can last hours. With a tension headache the pressure on the spinal nerve is not severe enough to affect blood flow. However, contraction of the neck muscles and tearing of the muscle fibres irritate the underlying nerves within the neck. The irritated nerve signals for muscles to tighten resulting in a cycle of spasmodic pain throughout the head = dull ache of a tension headache.
- Note! A misaligned vertebrae can put pressure on spinal nerves resulting in headache pain.

Anatomy of a Headache:

Headaches are more than just an ache in your head. It involves other parts of your body too. At the core of your problem may be the spine, which often gets pushed out of alignment by poor posture or injury. Like wobbly, unbalanced building blocks, even misalignments in your lower back can throw off the stability of your upper back and even your neck. The body is always trying to balance itself, therefore a misalignment towards one side in the back would very likely lead to an equal and opposite shifting in the upper back/neck. This may eventually lead to a tension headache or a migraine. Certain substances, such as caffeine, alcohol, or digestives, preservatives (nitrites), can also contribute to migraine headaches.

Your Head and Neck in Alignment:

Like a willow that bends in the wind, your spine's three natural curves give your body the flexibility it needs to withstand stress. Good posture keeps your spinal curves aligned. When your cervical curve (neck) is misaligned, surrounding structures, like spinal nerves, perform their jobs more smoothly because they aren't stressed or irritated.

Tension Headache:

Tension headaches are the most common type of headache you can get. Although stress and fatigue can make them worse, or trigger the onset of pain, a tension headache often starts with a misaligned vertebrae. This misalignment may irritate a spinal nerve, setting in motion other physi-

cal problems, like tightening muscles, and causing the steady, "viselike" pain of a tension headache.

Migraine Headache:

A migraine often begins with either restricting blood flow into your head or irritating a spinal nerve. This nerve irritation upsets your autonomic nervous system, which controls unconscious functions like narrowing and expansion of your blood vessels. Foods that narrow blood vessels (vasoconstrictors) or expand them (vasodilators) can also trigger migraines.



Massage Therapy and Headaches

Headaches and stress; Stress and headaches. Often, both go hand in hand. When someone experiences a heightened amount of stress, headaches can often ensue. In turn, headaches can also lead to additional stress because of such things as poor sleep

quality or diminished work capacity when meeting a deadline. Stress induced headaches are amongst the most common complaints reported by patients in most clinics. Normally, the first step is to determine the type of headache as the treatment approach varies.

The Majority are Fibrocystic, or Stress headaches. Most of the remaining headaches include Migraines and Cluster Headaches.

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Massage Therapy and Headaches (continued)

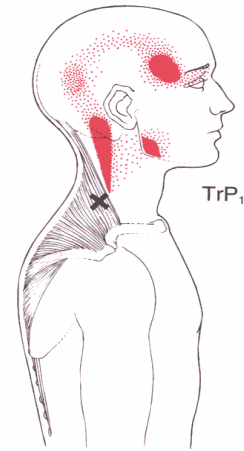
Stress headaches are treated primarily through relaxation and the release of spasms. Heat is often applied to muscles of the upper back to restore nutritional support (i.e. circulation) to the tissues and to augment trigger point therapy. Sometimes low grade joint mobilizations and mild neck stretches are employed.

Migraine & Cluster headaches are considered vascular and are treated differently than stress headaches. To find the difference between Migraine and Tension Headaches, read the sidebar on the first page. Cluster headaches are relatively rare. Typically there is no throbbing. There is intense pain to

the eye and nose on one side and both may begin to water. The skin on the affected side may turn red. Often, the headaches occur 2-3 times per day lasting 10 minutes to 2 hours over a short period of time (5-6 weeks). The headaches "cluster" together.

Vascular headaches are triggered by such things as diet, weather changes, light effects and smells, and stress. Naturally, one tries to avoid the triggers, but it may prove difficult in some cases.

Treatment is similar to stress headaches, but heat is never added during an episode. Between episodes heat may be added but care is taken if heat is the trigger.



Do your headaches hurt in the red zones?

Natural Joint Support: Glucosamine and Chondroitin

Glucosamine

Glucosamine is a natural substance found abundantly in the human body. It is one of the major building blocks for the body's synthesis and maintenance of healthy joint tissue. The body uses glucosamine to produce more cartilage components such as glycosaminoglycans, hyaluronic acid (natural lubricant found in synovial fluid), and collagen.

Athletes, especially those who participate in endurance sports or those involving repetitive movements should be interested in glucosamine. These activities may result in wearing down the joint function. This is commonly referred to as degenerative joint disease and Osteoarthritis.

Benefits: By supplementing the glucosamine naturally present, the body is able to facilitate the manufacture of joint constituents necessary for the repair of articular cartilage in injured joints. There is also a resupply of synovial fluid for proper articular function and mobility.

Research has suggested that the use of glucosamine may be beneficial in preventing overuse injuries to joints as well as aiding in the recovery of damaged connective tissue. Promising research has shown that glucosamine may help the body actually regenerate cartilage in addition to easing the pain caused by insufficient lubricants and poor shock absorption.

Glucosamine is not an instant "pain killer" and may initially take approximately 4-8 weeks before results are evident. So be patient, it is recommended to take the supplement for a minimum of 2 months before deciding whether it is beneficial. Remember that this is a supplement and changes may occur more slowly than would be expected with a drug compound.

Varieties of Glucosamine: Glucosamine is commonly

found in 2 varieties, sulfate and HCL. The two are identical in their effects, though the HCL form is more bioavailable (easier for your body to absorb) and more cost effective.

Side effects and Drug interaction: Both the sulfate and HCL forms, have thus far been shown to be extremely safe and effective. There have been no known drug interactions, however, you should consult Dr. Rodwin or Dr. Schachtel if you are insulin dependant diabetic or if you are pregnant.

Dosage: Daily dosage may vary depending on the severity of the condition, weight, and the length of time the supplement has been taken. It is best to speak to the Doctor before deciding on your personal dose. It is recommended that Glucosamine be taken daily with meals and not with caffeine which may inhibit absorption.

Chondroitin Sulfate

Chondroitin sulfate is a natural biological component derived from connective tissue such as cartilage, ligaments, and tendons. This substance may strengthen and add flexibility to your tendons and cartilage.

Benefits: Chondroitin sulfate may reduce swelling and inflammation in joints and also inhibit the production of damaging enzymes that would otherwise act on critical joint components thus weakening them. Research has demonstrated that chondroitin sulfate, like glucosamine, may be beneficial in preventing overuse injuries to joints as well as aiding in the recovery of damaged connective tissue.

Side Effects: Chondroitin sulfate has thus far been shown to be safe and effective with no side effects.

Dosage: Often seen in combination with glucosamine due to their synergistic effects.