



Headaches

Natural solutions to ease those pains in the head

Headaches are an extremely common health concern in the United States. Approximately 10% of the population suffer from migraine headaches. The situation with tension headaches is even worse—up to 40% of the population suffers from them. Americans buy literally tons of aspirin and other pills each year to ease headache pain. The sad thing is that this money is being spent to mask the symptoms and not to deal with the underlying causes. So, the headaches keep coming back.

In general, most headaches fall into two categories: vasoconstrictive and vasodilative. *Vasoconstrictive headaches* are caused by a lack of blood flow to the head area, typically the result of tension in the neck and shoulders caused by lymphatic stagnation and muscle cramping. Sometimes known as tension headaches, vasoconstrictive headaches typically create a sensation of pressure on the head, as if the head is being constricted by a vise or a belt. The tension in the neck and shoulders often also creates spinal subluxations, constricting nerves coming from the neck. In these cases, there may be a sense of pain in the neck.

Vasodilative headaches are caused by the exact opposite problem, i.e., by too much blood flowing to the head area. This is the typical pattern of most migraine headaches. With vasodilative headaches, there is a sensation that the head is exploding outward. There is a pounding, throbbing quality to the pain, often accompanied by sensitivity to light and sound. Someone with a vasodilative headache would usually like nothing more than to rest in a darkened, quiet room.

Cluster headaches are less common than tension headaches or migraines. Interestingly, cluster headaches tend to strike men more than women, unlike migraines, which tend to occur more often in women than in men. Sharp and extremely painful, they generally affect one side of the head and may be associated with tearing of the eyes and nasal congestion. Their name comes from the fact that they tend to occur in clusters, happening repeatedly every day at the same time for several weeks and then disappearing for weeks at a time. Cluster headaches have been connected to a history of heavy smoking, alcohol use, glare and stress.

Sinus headaches cause pain in the front of your head and face. They are due to inflammation in the sinus passages that lie behind the cheeks, nose and eyes. The pain tends to be worse when you bend forward and when you first wake up in the morning. They're often accompanied by postnasal drip, sore throat and nasal discharge.

There is a common denominator in all types of headaches—*inflammation*. Different things may cause the inflammation in different types of headaches, but if we're able to extinguish the

inflammation, clearly the pain will subside as well. Anti-inflammatory remedies that may be helpful for headaches include APS II with White Willow, Nerve Eight and Feverfew. Drinking lots of pure water to flush toxins can also be helpful.

In each type of headache, this inflammation can be at least partially triggered by outside stimuli like stress, food sensitivities and chemical toxicities. So, the real key to getting rid of headaches is to identify these triggers and minimize exposure to them. Otherwise, the headaches just keep coming back. For this reason, one of the best defenses against recurrent headaches is to keep a headache journal so that one can learn over time to make connections between the headaches and what triggers them.

In addition, here are some specific suggestions for specific types of headaches.

Tension headaches are often stress related, so it's important for people who suffer from them to find ways to reduce stress in their life. They may also be a sign that the pH of the body is too acidic, so it's important to eat less acid-producing and more alkalizing foods. Massaging the head and neck areas not only relaxes muscles in spasm; it also promotes lymphatic drainage which eliminates both inflammation and the toxins causing it. The effect can be further strengthened by massaging the head, neck and shoulders with Tei Fu or Deep Relief oils, or a combination of Lobelia and Capsicum extracts.

Massage can help vasodilative headaches, too. Vasodilative headaches often arise from an overburdened liver and digestive tract. They may be a sign of food allergies or chemical toxicity. Liver cleanses can be extremely helpful in clearing toxins and reducing the sensitivities that lead to these headaches. Feverfew, Liver Balance, Mood Elevator and/or a good colon cleanse are remedies that may be helpful.

Chronic sinus problems are almost always linked to a congested colon, so a good colon cleanse like the Tiao He or CleanStart programs will be helpful. Decongestants like Fenugreek and Thyme or AL-J can help clear the sinuses and ease sinus pain.

Each situation is different, and will require different kinds of remedies to ease the underlying cause and get rid of headaches for good. For specific help with headaches, consult your local herb specialist, or some of the resources below.

Additional Resources

The Comprehensive Guide to NSP by Tree of Light Publishing
The ABC+D Approach by Steven Horne
The Little Herb Encyclopedia by Jack Ritchason
Nutritional Herbology by Mark Pederson

For Educational Purposes Only

Seek appropriate professional assistance for all serious health problems. Handout prepared by Tree of Light Publishing
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