



Migraines

Natural Ways to Treat and Prevent Severe Headaches

Migraines are severe, recurrent headaches that are caused by changes in blood flow to the brain. The pain is often accompanied by visual symptoms (flashes of light across the field of vision), nausea and vomiting, dizziness, and weakness. Migraines can be very debilitating. Senses are heightened and slight noises, changes in light or movement become unbearable. They last from one to three days.

Migraines can be caused by too much blood flow to the brain, or too little. When too much blood is flowing to the brain there is a pounding or throbbing sensation in the head. It is very important to distinguish this vasodilative pain from the pain caused by constriction of blood flow to the head. Vasoconstrictive headaches are caused by tension that blocks the flow of blood to the brain. The pain in this case feels like a band or pressure (like a vise) squeezing in on the head.

The remedies for vasoconstrictive headaches and vasodilative headaches have opposite actions. This means if you take the wrong remedy, you will actually make the headache worse.

The exact causes of migraines are unknown, but this may be because migraines can be triggered by a variety of problems. Stressful emotions such as anger, excitement or anxiety have been known to trigger migraine headaches. So, learning to manage stress better can be helpful. B-complex vitamins or Nutri-Calm taken regularly may help reduce stress that brings on migraines.

It is also known that migraines can be triggered by allergic reactions to foods, especially foods containing the amino acid tyramine, or by chemical sensitivity, such as a sensitivity to MSG. MSG is common in Chinese food, but is also found in many canned soups and packaged food products. Foods containing tyramine include aged protein foods such as hot dogs, cheese, sausages, cold cuts and smoked or pickled fish, and alcoholic beverages, especially red wine. Other allergens associated with migraines include cows milk, wheat, chocolate, eggs, and oranges.

There is a strong connection between migraine headaches and liver problems. In Chinese medicine there is a concept of "liver fire rising," in which excess heat from the liver rises to the head creating a flushing of the face. Since the liver is the primary organ of chemical detoxification and is associated with food allergies and chemical sensitivities, it is very possible that migraines may be a symptom of stress on the liver.

Studies showed that feverfew can be taken daily as a preven-

tive medicine to reduce the frequency and severity of vasodilative migraine headaches. Feverfew, however, does not work on migraines once the pain has started. Other bitter herbs that help with liver detoxification can also be used to reduce the frequency and severity of vasodilative migraines. For instance, the Liver Balance formula or the Enviro-Detox formula taken regularly may also help to reduce the frequency and severity of migraines. Evening primrose oil reduces inflammation and may also be helpful.

Because the blood vessels tend to constrict in the beginning stages of a migraine, then dilate, resulting in the extreme pain, it may be possible to use relaxing herbs at the very first sign of discomfort to prevent the migraine from occurring. One sufferer found that four capsules of Stress-J and four capsules of feverfew taken at the very beginning of a migraine stopped the migraine from coming on.

For vasoconstrictive migraines, vasodilative remedies such as lobelia, black cohosh, ginkgo or periwinkle are helpful. It is important to stress that these herbs should not be used with vasodilative migraines, as they will only make them worse. Magnesium, however, can be taken regularly to help prevent both vasoconstrictive and vasodilative migraines.

A remedy that has helped many people relieve migraine headaches, once they have started, is to massage Tei Fu oils into the neck, shoulders, and temples. Work any tense muscles in the neck and shoulders and help those muscles to relax. By massaging lobelia essence and Tei Fu oils into the neck and shoulders every evening before bed, one can keep these muscles loose, which also seems to prevent migraines.

Because migraines can have emotional triggers, emotional healing exercises may also be helpful. Migraine sufferers often have very tense shoulder muscles suggesting they are carrying too many burdens. The stiffness they often have in their neck is often associated with a kind of pride that results in an inability to ask for and receive help from others. Migraine sufferers often need to learn to let go of some of their burdens and receive more help from others. Working on these issues has also helped many migraine sufferers to permanently rid themselves of this painful affliction.

Selected References

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