

Headaches

Headache types:

Migraine

Tension/vascular

Withdrawal

Poisons/toxins

Menstrual

High blood pressure

Infection

Sinus/allergy

Injury

Hunger

Dehydration

Constipation

Postural

An Overview of Headache

Did you think the list would be so big? Most here are listed by their general cause, but if you look at these you can group many together for example: constipation, withdrawal and poisons/toxins headache. These can be grouped because the root cause is very similar between them and many of the treatments are going to be the same.

If inside our bodies they are similar, maybe we can simplify the way we look at them. Let's say our body's work like an elevator. The elevator brings up people to the 10th floor and it brings them back down to the 1st floor. Blood and nutrients are brought up to our heads and waist is brought out of our heads. People get off on the 10th floor do their work and at the end of the day go back down to the 1st floor to their car and leave. Elevators could go wrong and get stuck somewhere on the 7th floor, never reaching the 10th floor. So now you have unhappy people stuck on the 10th floor, I can already feel the headache starting. Our bodies are dependent on the free flow of blood and nutrients to the head and brain, and the elimination of waist from them. Our brains consume 20% of the oxygen carried in our body. Burning that much energy will make a lot of waist. Therefore without enough circulation up and out of the head we could be causing quite a few of these headache listed, including migraine, tension, postural, constipation, dehydration. If you are getting a headache you need to ask yourself "is my elevator stuck in my chest?"

Or how about this. The elevator brings up a load full of angry skunks. This time the elevator is working fine, but it's carrying a mighty nasty load. This is like chemical warfare, and a mad dash to the elevator by the people on the 10th floor is bound to upset

these skunks. The right chemicals make the brain a mighty machine. The wrong chemicals can kill the brain. We can even see the right chemicals go bad. Such as tension or menstrual headache where the normal chemical balance is thrown off. Now you ask yourself “do I have skunks in my head?”

So we have two general problems so far, poor circulation in and out of the head, and presence of irritants in the head.

You can also describe a headache as either too much of something or too little of something. With high blood pressure, migraine, tension type headache you have too much of a good thing up there. You have too much blood, too many thoughts, too many things that are keeping your brain from running free and easy. If you have hunger or dehydration you have too little energy or water up there.

Now we have four ways to describe a headache. First, poor circulation in and out of the head. Second, the presence of irritants in the head. Third and fourth, too much or too little of something. In real life you will probably mix and match.

Specific Help for Your Headache

I will go through the main types of headaches and talk about how to fix them. By the way chronic headache are best treated before they happen. This is true if you take a natural approach, as I am recommending, or a pharmaceutical approach. There is a lot you can do to keep your body from getting headaches if you work in advance of the problem. Look for triggers and patterns in your life that may bring them on. Take supplements and use acupuncture to change the patterns in your body causing headache.

There is something called the “rebound effect”. Taking a lot of strong pain killers to make it through this headache will make it more likely you will get another headache right on it’s heels. So thinking ahead will give you the greatest benefit.

Migraine Headache

A true migraine has a set of possible symptoms: visual disturbance, nausea, weakness, irritability, depression, sensitivity to light and sound, sweating, chills, and more. The possible causes are anything from stress, alcohol, allergies, hormone imbalance, in other words you have a mad skunk messing up the wallpaper in your head. Everything I mentioned changes the chemical balance in your head. Stress releases chemicals that changes blood flow, stimulates combative cell behavior, and suppresses cell growth and immune function. Leading to an accumulation of waste products surrounding your cells. Allergies, hormone imbalance, pollution all have the ability to create destructive chemical responses. So you have a skunk in your head.

A migraine also messes with the elevator, the flow of blood in and out of your head. It seems to bring the blood up to the head but does not allow for proper circulation out. Not only do you have a bunch of the wrong chemicals in your head, they can’t get out. You have a case of too much in your head.

To get this stuff out of your head you need some nice cool help to circulate the garbage down and out. Feverfew is an herb that is easy to find off the shelf and it does just this, it has an emotional calming, cooling, descending quality. Some other effective herbs for this are chrysanthemum, chamomile, valerian, lavender, mint, skullcap. Minerals in general have a cooling, descending quality, but magnesium is especially helpful. It too has a calming, muscle relaxing benefit. There are combination products that may have a couple of the things I have talked about in one pill. One formula that uses Feverfew and Magnesium together has shown to dramatically reduce frequency and severity for chronic migraine sufferers when taken long term.

Some headaches, and especially a migraine brings the Liver into play. The Liver is the master of smooth circulation. It is the secret partner of the Heart in this respect. It purifies and monitors the blood. It is the master of your anger and stress. When you have a good emotional keel you will handle stress and your Liver will clean and circulate, nutritious blood. Good blood nourishes your eyes, relaxes your muscles, and mellows your emotions. Therefore preventing headaches. So don't forget your Liver, it may be a factor.

You can keep your Liver well by eating dark green vegetables, and staying away from greasy foods. A small amount of sour foods are good, like lemonade. Exercising. There are a number of herbs that are healthy for the Liver. Dandelion is not only good as an herbal supplement but it is good in a salad or as a cooked vegetable. Milk Thistle is the most popular herb in America for the Liver. It is an herb that stimulates proper Liver function, and gentle enough to use regularly. Many herbs in the thistle family are good, Blessed Thistle and Artichoke included. Bupleurum is the most popular herbs in the orient for Liver health. It is stronger than Milk Thistle, but must be used for no more than three months at a time. There are other potentially helpful herbs for general Liver health. I can only talk about a few, but don't discount the power and diversity of what nature has to offer.

Tension/Vascular Headache

Tension or vascular headache are where your body creates a knot in one part of your body which changes the flow in your blood vessels, which effects another part of your body. Often tension in the shoulders or neck will end up giving you a headache. Again you have too much of something, stuck in your head, unable to get out. Thoughts and stress chemicals banging away at you. Let me remind you our subconscious mind has more thoughts in it than our conscious mind. Our bodies are so complex and so strong it usually takes years of abuse before it even starts to complain. By the time you get chronic headaches you need to change your thinking and behavior patterns on a deep level.

Treating headaches nutritionally you can use many of the same things for the same reasons as you would a migraine. Add some that are good for calming the spirit: Holy Basil, Zizyphus, and again Bupleurum is good for this. Acupuncture works extremely well for this. Acupuncture is not only strong at controlling pain; it is very good at breaking up long standing knots in your muscles.

Withdrawal and Poison/Toxins Headache

I'll talk about these together because they are caused by the same type of problem, irritation from unwanted substances in your blood. Whether it is from a solvent, as when you breath too much paint thinner, or an imbalance of cellular chemicals, your body needs to do two things.

Keep the blood flowing, which tends to get blocked, and eliminate the irritating substances. To keep the blood flowing there is always Feverfew. Also consider Cayenne, Ginkgo Biloba, Turmeric.

Then to eliminate the chemicals stimulate the Liver, purify the blood, and wash it all out. Liver tonics are such herbs as Milk Thistle. Blood purifiers are grasses and sea vegetables such as wheat grass or chlorella. Washing it out with diuretics like Dandelion. This program should make the headache pass faster.

Menstrual Headache

This is the first one on my list that could be considered a headache from not having enough of something in your head. All your body's efforts are focused below, leaving a void of blood flow above. Taking a lot of blood movers at this time may just increase your menstrual flow but have a minimal benefit for a headache. What you need is to build blood so you have enough blood to circulate all around. Building blood takes time. There are a number of supplements that can build blood such as grasses and sea vegetables, omega oils (esp. Evening Primrose Oil), Dong Quai. These are the smart way to build blood, giving your body the nutrients it needs to build blood without over doing the iron (which is hard to absorb).

Black Cohash is an herb that supports hormone levels and has a cooling, lifting effect. It is very good at calming hot flashes and may be helpful with your headache. Balancing hormones is another step up in making this work better. So taking Vitex (Chastetree), or other progesterone sources will complete this type of treatment. These are things you can find easily. There are other treatments that I offer that are tailored to your specific needs using a formula like Rambling Powder and/or acupuncture.

High Blood Pressure Headache

This is an issue affecting your whole body that tends to have few symptoms. Headaches are one possibility because it is a little like a thermometer that keeps going up when the pressure rises. You may have eye redness, ear ringing, insomnia (due to restless mind). All these signs of there being too much of something in your head. Blood movers are very important here because when the blood stops it becomes something life threatening. There are literally dozens of things that are proven safe and effective without using drugs to treat high blood pressure. Beta Sitosterol, Hawthorn, omega oils are just three of them.

You have the image of there being too much rising to the roof with high blood pressure, often there is something missing that will act as a counterweight to hold all this energy down. For the right people you have to focus on adding something that has a nourishing benefit. Things like omega oils or Gastrodia & Uncaria formula. This formula has a

number of benefits. It can prevent or help recovery from a stroke, it can help with ear ringing, headache, eye irritations, dizziness. But it is nourishing and can be taken long term.

For acute pain relief again try Feverfew, Magnesium and add Cayenne to the mix.

Infection, Sinus/Allergy Headache

These are grouped together because of similar treatments. You are looking at unwelcome visitors here. The ever present germ. Most of the time we control the germs in our environment, sometimes they get the best of us. It is important to kill these germs and to keep the sinus fluid to a minimum. Yin Qiao is a very popular and powerful formula for both these reasons. You can go to many locations to find herbs for head colds. What you may not realize is how many of the Chinese herbs are now mainstream cold and flu fighting herbs. The most fashionable cold season supplement “airborne” has a number of the herbs from Yin Qiao in it. Chronic sinus infections can benefit from a different or additional set of helpers like Wild Oregano Oil. It is stronger at controlling the types of germs common to the chronic sinus issue. There is a classic formula called Ligusticum with Green Tea Decoction that is specific to headache due to cold or flu. In this case a small amount of caffeine from Green Tea is part of the therapy as well as a wealth of antioxidants.

It's very important to keep the sinus fluid and swelling down. When there is too much congestion it prevents your immune system from entering the area. The main herbs for this are Ginger, Rosemary and Turmeric. Ginger is easy to find and is useful in any of its forms, prepared as a pill, or fresh from the produce department. A Neti pot is a device used to give your sinuses a shower. You use saline water to rinse out mucus and keep the area open. You can use a small amount (a few drops) of a germ killer like GSE with the saline.

Conclusion

I have talked about many types of headaches and how to set them apart. And I have talked about treatments for them. Believe me I have only scratched the surface. If you have chronic headaches you can benefit from many natural helpers. They will eliminate or reduce your need to look at drugs to cope. You can start to do some research yourself. Look for things that are helpful at circulating blood, and are cooling and calming for your migraines. Look for germ killing, mucus drying supplements for your sinus headaches. You can also benefit from an approach that is specific to your needs. Acupuncturists trained in Oriental Medicine look at each individual as unique, requiring a unique approach to your treatment. I am here to help you find the most effective way to control an ongoing problem.

Thank you,
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