

HealthWays®

Compliments of Your Doctor of Chiropractic

Take Control of Your Headaches

It is estimated that 90% of men and 95% of women had at least one headache last year.¹ Studies have also suggested that despite this large number of headaches, about half of sufferers fail to seek treatment.² Unfortunately, this means that a large portion of those with headaches are either suffering needlessly or they are self-treating with medications – neither of these “solutions” addresses the cause(s) of the headaches and, therefore, there is no prevention of future pain. This is not control. To take control of your headaches, seek care from your Doctor of Chiropractic.

True control will require your active participation in three easy steps: diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

The Diagnosis

Diagnosis in your chiropractor's office will begin with thorough physical and spinal examinations, and, if clinically necessary, diagnostic tests (which may include X-rays, neurological, orthopedic, and the ordering of laboratory blood and/or urine tests). In addition, be prepared for in depth discussion and questioning about your diet, health history, headache frequency and severity, accident history, habits and activities, and other factors that may play a role in causing

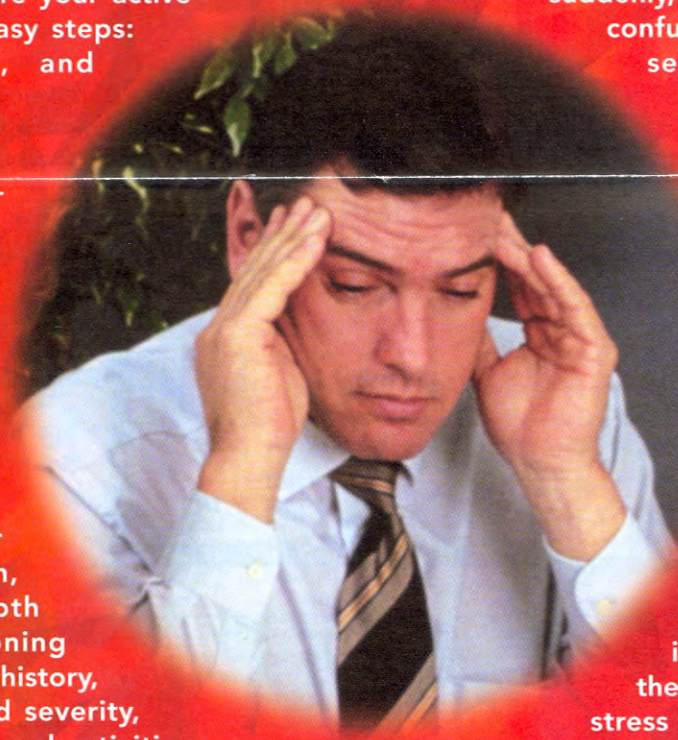
your headaches. Keeping a written daily diary will obviously help you remember factors that may influence your headaches and will ensure a more accurate determination of factors that may precipitate your headaches (see “Illustrated HealthWays”).

The first determination will be whether your headache is **secondary** or **primary**. Secondary headaches are those caused by another physical condition – and these are the ones that people worry about with a severe headache. Fortunately, these account for less than 10% of all headaches.

That said, however, if your headache comes on suddenly, is accompanied by numbness, confusion, slurred speech, or other severe or unusual symptom(s), **SEEK EMERGENCY CARE.**

Primary headaches include tension-type, migraine, and cervicogenic headache.

- Tension-type headaches, sometimes called muscle contraction, are by far the most common type, accounting for an estimated 85% of all head pain. Men and women suffer from tension headaches at equal rates. Pain is generally mild to moderate, can last for a few hours to a full day, and is usually felt in the back of the neck and on the scalp. They may be caused by stress and can become chronic, with some people suffering daily headaches.



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- Migraine headaches are notorious for their severity and potential for unusual symptoms. Women are more likely to suffer from migraines than men, although before puberty and after menopause, males and females suffer at approximately equal rates. Migraines may run in families and can, therefore, affect children. The American Council for Headache Education (ACHE) believes that “if one parent has migraine, the child has a 50 percent chance of having migraine. If both parents have them, there is a 75 percent chance that the child will have them, too.”²

Migraine pain is often severe and disabling, affecting work, family, and social lives. There are two types of migraine – those with aura and those without. Both types are characterized by throbbing pain, typically on one side of the head (pain may alternate sides); nausea and vomiting, and light and sound sensitivity. Migraine with aura also includes visual disturbances (the “aura”) such as jagged lines or flashing lights in the visual field, blind spots, or even visual or auditory hallucinations. Disruptions in smell, taste, and touch may also be experienced.

- Cervicogenic headaches are those caused by aberrations in the structures of the neck, including the joints, ligaments, muscles, or cervical spinal discs. In fact,

Illustrated HealthWays: Keeping a Headache Diary

Before your chiropractic appointment for treatment of headaches, consider the following questions and bring your answers to the appointment. If you suffer from frequent headaches, keep a daily journal answering the pertinent questions (marked with a star) – it may help you and your doctor to recognize headache triggers.

1. How old are you now, and at what age did your headaches begin?
2. Have you had any changes in diet, stress, habits, or lifestyle?*
3. Did anything unusual occur before the headache started?*
4. How often do they occur?
5. Do headaches occur at regular intervals or at specific times of the day?*
6. Where do you experience pain first?*
7. How intense is the pain?* (Categorizing pain on a 1=no pain to 10=severe pain scale may be helpful.)
8. How quickly do your headaches begin and how long does it take for pain to peak?*
9. How long do your headaches last?*
10. Do other symptoms appear before the actual pain?*
11. Do other symptoms accompany the headache at all – and in what order do they appear?*
12. What relieves the pain?*
13. Do other family members get headaches?
14. What prompted you to seek chiropractic treatment now?
15. How often do you take over-the-counter medications, and what kind do you take?

Research Review.....

According to a recent study, chiropractic patients with chronic low back pain (LBP) and sciatica are taught to manage their pain – and do so – more often than medical patients.

Among the study’s findings:

- At 10 days after treatment, nearly 80% of chiropractic patients expressed agreement with the statement “I knew what to do to take care of my back after the visit with my doctor/provider.” At one year, that number was up to just under 90%. In contrast, at 10 days post-treatment, 56% of medical patients agreed with that statement; 55.5% agreed one year later.
- Over 90% of chiropractic patients received spinal manipulation; two-thirds received physiotherapy modalities.
- Eighty-one percent of medical patients received medication (nearly 42% were prescribed narcotics).
- Chiropractic patients were more likely to take dietary supplements.
- Chiropractic patients were more likely to exercise (aerobic, strengthening or stretching).
- Self-care education was “conspicuous” in chiropractic practice.

(Nyiendo J, Haas M, Goldberg B, Lloyd C. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*. November/December 2001; Vol. 24, No. 9.)

cervicogenic means originating in the neck. Symptoms of cervicogenic headache can mimic both tension and migraine headache.

Fortunately, your Doctor of Chiropractic can differentiate between the types of headache and their causes. Research has shown that chiropractic management of these types of headache is effective and safe.^{3,4} Some research suggests that not seeking treatment for chronic headaches can lead to psychiatric disorders, such as depression.⁵ For this reason, it is important to go beyond diagnosis and follow up with the appropriate treatment.

The Treatment

Only after a diagnosis of your headache type and the determination of its causes will chiropractic treatment begin – if it is determined that chiropractic is the form of care

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most appropriate for your case. If it is found that another type of treatment would be beneficial, you will be referred to the most suitable health care provider.

If chiropractic care will best meet your needs, treatment will begin after it is first outlined and explained to you. Chiropractic is a form of care that uses several means of treatment to reach the desired result. Treatment may include spinal adjustment (also called manipulation) to improve spinal alignment; physical modalities such as application of heat or ice, electric muscle stimulation, ultrasound, massage, or others may be used, and specific recommendations to improve your diet, exercise, posture, or sleeping habits will be discussed as they affect your headache frequency. Relaxation techniques may also be discussed.

The Prevention

Once your Doctor of Chiropractic has determined the cause(s) of your headaches, you will know how to avoid future headaches. For example, if it is found that your headaches tend to occur following a late lunch, future care to eat at regular intervals will prevent at least some of your headaches.

The list of possible headache triggers is extensive. Some of the more common culprits are: chocolate; caffeine; food additives, such as monosodium glutamate (MSG) or nitrates; alcohol; stress or anxiety; hormonal changes associated with puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause; and changes in altitude, time zone, meal times, or sleep.

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News & Views

Calcium and Colon Cancer

Analysis of data gathered from the 88,000 women in the Nurses Health Study suggests that calcium intake of at least 700 mg a day may reduce the risk of some types of cancer, including left-side colon cancer. The researchers also analyzed data from the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, which includes 47,000 men. They found that people who got 700 to 800 milligrams daily of calcium had a 40% to 50% decrease in incidence of left-side colon cancer. "Left-side" refers to the last segment of the large intestine. There was no statistically significant risk reduction of cancer other than colon cancer. The researchers note that the study's results are significant for showing that calcium is beneficial beyond building bone strength. This study was published in *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. (The Associated Press. March 19, 2002.)

For information on appropriate dietary supplement dosages – and how to get the most vitamins and minerals from food – consult your Doctor of Chiropractic.

Eat Cooked Tomatoes for a Healthier Prostate

Further evidence suggests that tomato products can reduce the risk of prostate cancer. Food choices and prostate cancer histories were analyzed from 47,000 men, aged 40 to 75, from 1986 to 1998. Even when other factors were taken into account, the researchers found that consumption of tomato products lowered risk of prostate cancer by 24% to 36%. Cooked tomato products – especially spaghetti sauce – seem to offer the most protection. It is theorized that lycopenes in tomatoes are the beneficial ingredient, though it is thought that the whole food is more beneficial than a supplement would be. (The Associated Press. March 6, 2002.)

Exercising Young Children

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has issued the first guidelines for the exercise needs of babies and toddlers. Too often, according to NASPE, babies and toddlers are "containerized," put into a stroller, baby seat, or playpen to keep them safe while a parent or guardian does other tasks. Jim Pivarnik, a co-author of the guidelines says that instead, babies need to be given a safe environment to explore, move, and ultimately develop motor skills that will help them progress. The guidelines, which were developed for parents, day care centers, and preschools, include the following recommendations:

- "Part of an infant's day should be spent in structured activity with a parent or caregiver – playing peekaboo or patty-cake, being carried to and exploring new environments.
- "Do not keep infants or toddlers in baby seats or other restrictive settings for long periods. Even young infants move differently when placed on a blanket on the floor than when in a baby seat.
- "Toddlers should accumulate at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity, and preschoolers at least an hour, during each day. Play follow-along songs, chase or ball; for older children, balancing games or tumbling increase strength and body control.
- "Toddlers and preschoolers should spend at least an hour, preferably more, a day in free play – exploring, experimenting, imitating. Caregivers should provide safe objects to ride, push, pull, balance on and climb.
- "Toddlers and preschoolers should not be sedentary for more than an hour at a time except when sleeping."

(The Associated Press. February 6, 2002.)

Rx ASK YOUR DOCTOR!

Q: How can I get the maximum benefit from my Doctor of Chiropractic?

A: While receiving chiropractic treatment you can magnify its positive effects by being a **seeker** and a **doer**. Seek additional information about your chiropractor and put his or her unique strengths, talents, special abilities, and interests to work for you. Seek more information about chiropractic and its scope of practice in your state. Chiropractic care has many impressive short- and long-term benefits that you need to be aware of in order to take advantage of them. Simply ask your Doctor of Chiropractic or the chiropractic office staff for this information. You may be pleasantly surprised.

To be a doer means that you actually follow through with the recommendations and suggestions your Doctor of Chiropractic gives you. Do not hesitate to ask questions and request a review of stretches, postural changes, and any other advice that has been given to you so that you thoroughly understand how and why to get the best results. Responsive patients get the maximum benefits from care and your Doctor of Chiropractic is more than willing to help you **seek** and **do**.

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Follow all recommended changes to lifestyle (such as improvements in diet, nutrition, exercise, and posture) and keep all health care appointments. The bottom line is that they are *your* headaches – you can be the one to control them.

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1. American Council for Headache Education. www.achenet.org
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*Good news should be shared.
Pass this newsletter on to a friend.*

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