



Oh, My Aching Head!

Don't Just Mask Headache Pain, Fix the Cause!

If you've never had a headache, you're pretty lucky since 90% of all Americans have them at some point in their lives. Even though we don't think of headaches as serious, headaches are one of the top ten reasons why people visit medical doctors; they are responsible for about 10 million doctor visits each year. Besides being painful, headaches are responsible for about 157 million lost workdays and about \$50 billion in health care costs.

People have been dealing with headaches for thousands of years, but headaches are not a simple health issue. Modern medicine has identified over 150 diagnostic categories for headaches. Most people never think about what causes their headaches, however; they just take an aspirin or other analgesic remedy, never addressing the issue, "Why is my head aching?" This question is particularly important if you are one of the 45 million Americans who suffer from chronic headaches.

Headaches can be caused by stress, eye strain, tension in the neck and shoulders, spinal misalignment, allergies, sinus problems, chemical sensitivity, physical injury and even certain prescription drugs. So, rather than simply popping an analgesic or toughing it out, why not explore what is causing your headaches so you can get rid of them for good?

Types of Headaches

Although there are many types of headaches, most headaches fall into one of three broad categories, tension, migraine or cluster. Some other major types of headaches include post-traumatic headaches (caused by injury or accident), sinus headaches, temporomandibular joint (TMJ) headaches and allergy-related headaches.

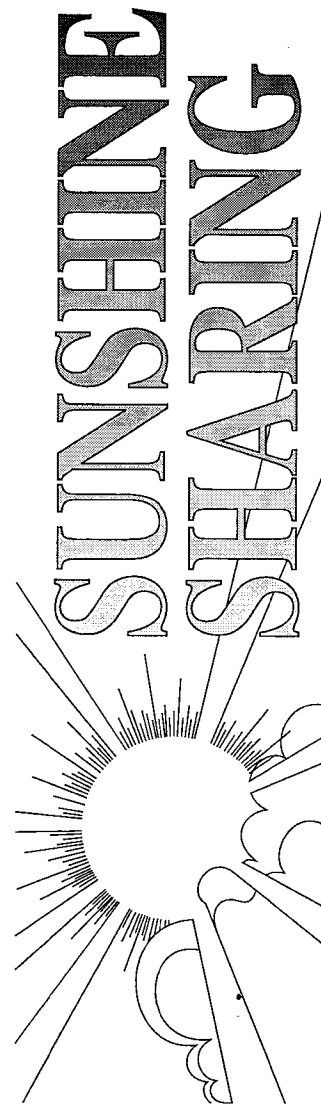
Tension headaches are generally the least severe, but they are also the most common, affecting about 90% of the population. As their name implies, they are typically caused by tension in the neck and shoulders, which can be brought on by stress, worry, insomnia or just working too much at a computer. They may also be caused by dehydration, caffeine and digestive upset from certain foods.

Migraine headaches are the next most common type and much more severe. About 25% of women and about 8% of men get migraines at some point in their life. Migraines can be triggered by a wide variety of factors ranging from bright lights, loud noises, stress and odors to allergic reactions, alcohol, exposure to smoke, hormonal changes and eating certain foods.

Cluster headaches are the least common and the most severe. Only one percent of the population suffers from this type of headache, which has similar triggers to migraines.

True to the mission of Sunshine Sharing, the whole body approach and natural solutions contained in this issue will help you better understand your headaches and choose the most effective remedies.

Learn what causes headaches and how to relieve them, inside...



Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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Headache Relief 101: The Basics

Headaches are a symptom of an imbalance in the body, or some type of interference with normal body processes. While an analgesic can temporarily suppress the pain, if you want long-term relief from chronic headaches, you need to start identifying what might be throwing your body out of balance.

For starters, dehydration can cause headaches. Many people simply do not drink enough water. If you have a headache, try drinking two or three glasses of water. Often this will result in an immediate reduction in pain. Make certain you drink at least one half-ounce of water per pound of body weight per day to stay properly hydrated. See sidebar for more information.

Beverages and Foods That Might Make Your Head Hurt

While increasing your water intake, try reducing consumption of caffeinated beverages (tea, coffee, energy drinks and soda) and alcohol. These beverages are all known to trigger headaches and they are dehydrating as well. If you consume them, increase your water intake even more. It is also wise to avoid MSG, aspartame (Nutri-Sweet®), aged meats and cheeses and foods containing nitrates (bacon, hot dogs, cured lunch meats) as these substances have also been known to trigger headaches.

Certain foods trigger what might be considered a brain "allergy." Histamine is a neurotransmitter in the brain and is also released during allergic reactions. In some people, certain foods appear to trigger excess histamine production, causing migraines. Common foods that may cause this reaction include: chocolate, processed and pickled foods, smoked fish, chicken livers, figs, avocados, bananas, citrus fruits, nuts, peanut butter, onions, dairy products and gluten-bearing grains like wheat, oats, barley and rye.

If you suffer from frequent headaches, especially migraines, it may be helpful to keep a food journal. Record what you eat throughout the day and the time you eat it. Also, record the times when you experience headaches. This can help you identify food triggers that may be making your head ache.

Relax and Relieve the Pain

Since muscle tension is the most common cause of headaches, find ways to reduce your stress and relax. If you work at a computer, take a break periodically to stretch and do some self-massage on your neck and shoulders. Rub a little **Tei Fu Essential Oil** or **Tei Fu Massage Lotion** into your neck and shoulders while doing the massage to ease the tension. If the muscles are really tense, try applying some **Lobelia Essence** to these areas as well.

You may find that the services of a massage therapist or chiropractor will be helpful, too. Having a massage is a great way to reduce stress and tension and can help reduce the frequency of headaches. Chiropractors often relieve headaches by adjusting the vertebrae in the upper back and neck to release pressure on nerves.

If you're under a lot of stress, take some supplements to help your body relax more, such as **Stress-J** or **Chinese Stress Relief**.

Also make sure you're getting enough sleep. Fatigue and insomnia are known to increase muscle tension, which increases your risk of getting a pain in your head. Try **Herbal Sleep** along with some **Kava Kava** to help you relax the tension in your body and get the sleep you need.

Alkalize Your Aching Head Away

Over acidity of the tissues increases tension and pain and may be an underlying factor in many headaches. Many people eat too many acid-forming foods, like meat and grains, without an adequate intake of water, fresh fruits and vegetables. **KB-C**, a Chinese formula for kidney chi deficiency, helps the kidneys flush acid waste out of the system more efficiently, especially if you increase water intake at the same time. KB-C has helped many people reduce their level of pain and tension, resulting in less headaches, reduced back pain and less stiffness and pain in the joints, too.

Ease the Eye and Neck Strain

Many people get headaches from working too much at the computer. As people strain to look at the screen, their head leans forward, causing the muscles in their upper back and neck to strain trying to hold the head up against the weight of gravity. This creates upper back, shoulder and neck tension, which can ultimately result in a "splitting" headache. Eye strain can also cause headaches.

The solution is simple. Make sure your work or reading area is well lit. Have your eyes checked regularly and wear glasses if needed. Take breaks from close work, letting your eyes look up and focus across the room every 15 minutes. It also helps to stretch the neck and shoulders backwards to help relax the muscles. Be aware of your posture and try to keep your head erect.

Hydrate your Headache Away!



Many people have discovered a simple, cheap and reliable headache remedy—water. Bathed in a saline solution, the brain is the most hydrated organ in the body. Even a slight decrease in the water level of the brain affects neurotransmitters that can trigger headaches. This may be why caffeine, alcohol and exercise trigger headaches; they all increase water loss.

So, a good place to start in eliminating chronic headaches is to increase your water intake and decrease consumption of alcohol, coffee, tea, energy drinks and soda pop (especially caffeinated sodas). This simple lifestyle change has helped thousands of people experience fewer headaches, get over them faster and, in some cases, eliminate them entirely.



Specific Remedies to Ease the Ache

Besides the general help for headaches listed on the previous page, the following provides some specific ideas for relieving various types of headaches. Be aware that chronic headaches may be a sign of other medical problems, including: infections, such as dental abscesses and ear infections, hypoglycemia, heat exhaustion, diseases of the eye, thyroid problems, hypertension, hormonal imbalances, mini-strokes, exposure to various toxins, side effects of medications and head trauma or injury. So, if your headaches are persistent, be sure to check with a medical doctor to help you identify and correct the underlying problem.

Natural Analgesics

Since most people reach for a remedy to ease the pain when they have a headache, it's nice to know that there are some safer natural alternatives you can turn to when your head is hurting. One of these is the herbal aspirin formula, **APS II**, which contains white willow bark and valerian. This formula relaxes tension and eases pain and inflammation. While it's not as strong as over-the-counter pain remedies, it is safer.

Willow bark, which contains salicylates, natural aspirin-like compounds that ease inflammation and pain, is also found in **IF Relief** and **Nerve Eight**. These formulas may also offer some analgesic relief to ease the pain if you have a headache. They work best when you take them with lots of water.

Migraine Headaches

Migraine headaches can be much more difficult to relieve than simple tension headaches. Migraines typically occur with vision disturbances or nausea. The pain may feel like your head is throbbing, pounding or pulsing. It also tends to start on one side of the head, although it may spread to both sides. Migraines are believed to originate in the brain with imbalances in neurotransmitters, like histamine, which change blood flow patterns in the head.

Migraines are often liver related and respond well to bitter herbs that help to detoxify the liver. In most migraines it seems like too much blood and energy is flowing upward into the head. Bitters draw blood and energy downward into the digestive tract and eliminative organs.

One of the most popular bitter herbs used to relieve migraines is feverfew. Studies have shown that feverfew can reduce both the symptoms and the severity of migraines in many people when taken regularly. It is important to understand that feverfew is not very effective at easing a migraine once it has started. It needs to be taken regularly to help prevent migraines. The active constituent is believed to be parthenolide, but there are other constituents that appear to be important as well. NSP's **Feverfew Concentrate** is a special high parthenolide feverfew.

It may also be helpful to take **Liver Balance** or do a **Tiao He Cleanse** if one is prone to migraines. These remedies help clear toxins out of the liver and improve liver detoxification, which can

help to balance neurotransmitters and reduce the frequency and severity of migraines.

Feverfew and other bitters work best on vasodilative migraines, where it feels like the head is pounding or exploding outward. Some people have vasoconstrictive migraines where the head feels like it's being squeezed or there is a tight belt around the head. For people with this type of migraine, taking **Ginkgo Biloba** regularly may help. Ginkgo increases blood flow to the brain.

Both types of migraines often involve food sensitivities as discussed on page two. For this reason, digestive enzymes, like **Proactacazyme**, may be helpful in migraine prevention. **HistaBlock**, which reduces allergic reactions, may also be helpful.

The neck and shoulder massage described on page two can often be helpful for easing migraines. Apply **Lobelia Essence** liberally to the neck and shoulders and follow this up with Tei Fu oil. Massage these areas to release any knots, pain or stiffness. You can also apply a drop of **Tei Fu Essential Oil** to each temple. Many people have found relief from migraines within 20-30 minutes using this technique.

Tension Headaches

If you have a tension headache, it is generally felt equally on both sides of the head. The pain may be dull or squeezing, with a sensation that the head is in a tight band or a vice. You will also typically have tension and even soreness in your neck and shoulders.

The quickest way to ease a tension headache is to drink a lot of water and massage your neck and shoulders to ease the tension as described on page two. Anything that helps your body relax is going to help you ease the pain of a tension headache, such as **Magnesium Complex** (empty the contents onto your tongue for a faster response), **Chinese Stress Relief** or **Nerve Eight**.

Tension headaches may arise from the digestive system and from being constipated. If you've got digestive upset, acid indigestion or your bowels aren't moving regularly, take something to clear out your gastrointestinal tract. For gas and bloating try the **Chinese Anti-Gas Formula**. For constipation take some **Gentle Move** or **LBS II** and drink lots of water. Often the headache will go away

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Additional Help and Information

For more information about easing headaches with natural remedies, contact the person who gave you this newsletter. Their contact information should be found at the top of page four. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult some of the following sources:

Definitive Guide to Headaches by Robert Milne, MD, Blake More and Burton Goldberg

Freedom from Headaches by Joel R. Saper, MD and Kenneth R. Magee, MD



Does Your Head Ache?

Are you one of the millions of people whose lives are disrupted by frequent tension headaches, migraines or other aches of the head? If so, this issue of Sunshine Sharing offers valuable insights on obtaining relief naturally.

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as soon as the digestive tract is clear. Alkalinizing the body is also helpful for easing problems with chronic tension headaches. Eat more fruits and vegetables and less meat and grains.

Sinus Headaches

Sinus headaches are the result of sinus infections and are felt in the sinus areas (below and above the eyes). Not all headaches felt in this area are related to the sinuses, however. It is only a sinus headache when their is infection present. Along with taking **Silver Shield** and/or **Goldenseal/Echinacea** to combat the infection, **Fenugreek and Thyme** is a dependable remedy for sinus headaches. Sniffing Tei Fu oil is also helpful.

Cluster Headaches

Cluster headaches are severe and often occur after a person falls asleep. The burning, sharp pain typically occurs on one side of the head, often around the eye. There is often swelling under or around the eye (or eyes), tearing, red eyes, runny nose and a flushed face.

Cluster headaches may be due to a lack of oxygen from congested sinuses or other problems. They may also be a sign of problems with the hypothalamus, hormonal imbalances, digestive disorders, nerve dysfunction, structural issues or stress.

Massaging a small amount of **Capsicum Extract** or Tei Fu oil on the temples may offer some relief. Also consider detoxification therapy, chiropractic care or craniosacral therapy. If you have problems with cluster headaches, work with your natural health care advisor to try to identify the underlying causes.