



Headache: A Clue to Other Health Problems

(From an Article by Dr. Burstein Appearing in The Independent Press, Wednesday, December 14, 1994)

By Dr. Edward M. Burstein

Are you one of the nearly 50 million Americans who suffer from severe, recurring attacks of migraine and tension headaches?

If you are, then you know headaches are annoying and painful. Perhaps you've contributed to the \$400 million spent each year on "over the counter" non-prescription drugs in search of a solution. You may gain temporary relief from the medications, if you're lucky. However, the headaches will return if the cause of the pain has not been addressed.

Unfortunately, seeking relief by drugging the pain often allows the cause of the symptoms to go untreated. Pain relief from pills is temporary and the distress cycle eventually continues. More headaches, more pills. The only permanent solution is to get to the root of the headache. I tell my patients that headaches are warning signals of a health problem that needs attention - headaches aren't enemies, but rather friends telling you to pay attention to your body.

A chiropractor who specializes in Applied Kinesiology will treat the cause of the headache rather than the pain. Headaches can be the result of a structural problem (frequently recurring head pains are often not related to the head at all), an allergy or biochemical problem, or simply emotional stress.

Of course, there are many, many other causes of headaches. Dehydration, for example, is a leading cause of minor head pain because often the body's water supply isn't sufficient to keep it working properly. However, in some patients the opposite holds true - retaining fluids can create head pain.

Tension headaches, or suboccipital neuralgia, are due to an irritation of the suboccipital nerves at the base of the skull and are an example of how a structural problem can refer pain to the head. Release of the pressure on the nerve will ease the tension.

Head pain caused by sinus and allergic problems are due to inflammation. The inflammation is a reaction to an allergen with which the body has come in contact. A chiropractor who specializes in Applied Kinesiology is able to identify the allergen and diagnose why your body is sensitive to it.

Migraines are caused by a disturbance of the nervous system resulting in abnormal blood circulation to the brain. Treatment of migraines should start with a diagnosis of why the nervous and circulatory systems went "haywire," followed by a plan to fix the underlying problem and restore proper functioning.

Finally, beware of environmental poisons that are harmful to the body and cause toxic headaches. Internal factors, as well, can also poison you - if your body cannot properly break down and eliminate waste products, the result is a build-up of toxic material within your body. By getting to the direct cause of the problem (perhaps a disturbance of the nervous system which leads to a slow down of the bowels, kidneys and liver) treatment can be given to help your body rid itself of these toxins.



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So remember, a headache is clue, a warning sign, of other problems. If you treat the pain rather than the cause, you may be gambling with you health.

Editor's note: Dr. Burstein is Clinical Director of the Berkeley Heights Chiropractic Center. He has been awarded the status of Teaching Diplomate by the International College of Applied Kinesiology, and shares this distinction with only four other chiropractors in the state and 117 worldwide. For information, call (908) 665-0770.