



More On Headaches

(From an Article by Dr. Burstein Appearing in The Independent Press, Wednesday, November 6, 1991)

By Dr. Edward M. Burstein

Headaches are painful. Headaches are annoying. Headaches afflict millions of people every day. Just like most people, you probably grumble and complain when you have a headache. Your first reaction is to reach for something to numb the pain - make the headache go away so that you can get on with your busy day.

But, have you ever stopped to think why you have a headache? Probably just tension, right? Or maybe you've been working too hard, or haven't eaten in a long time. Maybe. Maybe not. In reality, headaches are warning signals of a health problem that needs attention. They're not really annoying enemies, but rather gracious friends telling you to pay attention to your body. Yet, instead of trying to find out what's wrong and helping your body to heal itself, you take the easy way out: cover up the pain.

So, what's the alternative? First, try to discover the cause of the headache and then fix the problem, not the pain. Dehydration is a leading cause of minor head pain. Often the body's water supply isn't sufficient to keep it working properly. Remember, in order to keep your body properly hydrated, you should drink at least one-half of your total body weight in ounces of plain water each day. Therefore, a large drink of water can often cure a headache.

However, the problem might not be that easy to fix. There are many types of headaches and many different causes of head pain. Tension, sinus and migraine headaches are the most common. Suboccipital Neuralgia, otherwise known as a tension headache, is due to an irritation of the suboccipital nerves at the base of the skull. Since irritation occurs when a bone presses on the nerves, release of this pressure - or an adjustment of the bone - will ease the tension.

Sinus and allergic headaches are due to inflammation of the sinus and nasal passages around the eyes and nose, and, in the case of allergic headaches, swelling around the brain. The inflammation is a reaction to an allergen with which the body has come in contact. You might try to eliminate the allergen from your environment, or you might seek help to find out why your body is sensitive to it, and how it might be trained or taught not to react adversely.

Migraines are caused by a disturbance of the nervous system resulting in abnormal blood circulation to the brain. The term "migraine" is overused and misused - it is not indicative whatsoever of the severity of pain. The answer for these debilitating headaches is determining why the nervous system went "haywire," and then treating the underlying problem to restore the proper function of the nervous system. Visual headaches are also related to the nervous system, but more specifically to the skull, or the cranium, and its influences on the cranial nerves.

There are also toxic and digestive headaches. Environmental poisons that are harmful to the body are the cause of many toxic headaches. Internal factors can also poison your body; the improper breakdown and elimination of waste products can result in the build up of toxic material within the body. By getting to the direct cause of the problem, treatment can be given to help your body rid itself of these toxins.



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In addition, other causes of head pain may include tumors, diseases of the nervous system and emotional factors. For this reason, headaches are warning signals that should not be ignored or covered up. Covering up the pain might make it go away - but you can bet pain will return if the cause of the problem is not discovered and treated effectively.

Editor's note: Dr. Burstein is founder and Clinical Director of the Berkeley Heights Chiropractic Center, a multi-doctor holistic health care center dedicated to natural healing and optimum health. 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. Dr. Burstein has lectured at Overlook Hospital and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital on immune, autoimmune and chronic degenerative diseases. For information, call (908) 665-0770.