

HEADACHES

- *Headaches account for approximately 156 million days of missed work in the U.S.
- *More than \$400 million is spent on over-the-counter pain relievers each year.
- *Women are affected by headaches twice as often as men.
- *At least 45 million Americans suffer from recurring headaches.
- *About 90% of headaches are signs of underlying disease.
- *Headaches are usually caused by changes that take place in muscles and blood vessels in the head, neck and shoulders.
- *Muscles often become tense, and are most commonly the result of one or more of the following: stress and emotional upsets, strenuous physical exertion, certain foods, skipping meals or physical ailments.
- *If you, or someone you know, is suffering from severe or chronic headaches, you should obtain advice from your physician on how to best control these. There is a variety of medications and different therapies that are used to help control headaches.

TYPES OF HEADACHES:

- ***Tension** headaches account for about 90% of all headaches. The pain is related to tightness of the head and/or neck muscles. Tension headaches usually build slowly and can last all day.
 - Acute** tension headaches can be triggered by stress, fatigue, emotional problems, eye strain, clenched teeth, overwork and sitting or standing in poor posture.
- ***Chronic** tension headaches occur repetitively over the course of several months or years and are often linked to psychological difficulties such as depression or anxiety.
 - Treatment for chronic headaches may include medications, recommended from your physician, including anti-depressants or beta-blockers.
- ***Exercise** may be beneficial to help reduce the frequency and severity of tension related headaches. Exercise helps to improve muscle tone of neck and back muscles, as well as general overall body circulation and fitness. This may make the muscles less prone to headaches. Also, people that exercise, increase the production of endorphins which is the bodies' own pain killer.
- ***Migraine** headaches account for approximately 8% of all headaches. About 10% of Americans suffer from migraine headaches and women account for more than 75% of all adults with migraine headaches. The migraine can last from several hours to several days. Along with the headache, the person may have nausea, dizziness, as well as sensitivity to light and sound.
 - It is important that migraine sufferers work on relaxation techniques to try to reduce stress in their lives, watch their diet closely - avoiding any foods that may trigger headaches, avoid skipping meals and receive plenty - but not too much rest.

***Cluster** headaches are extremely painful and 90% of the sufferers are men. Most of these men are smokers. Cluster headaches usually stay in one area of the head and often will include congestion of the nostril on the effected side. The cluster headache may only last 20 minutes to an hour, however, it will usually occur several times per day. Cluster headaches can occur for several days or even months at a time. These headaches can then vanish for several months or years before returning. There doesn't seem to be any genetic relation to the headaches and the only common denominator is that it is usually men who are smokers.

***Weekend** headaches are common for a lot of people and are often considered to be related to caffeine withdrawal. It takes 24-36 hours for the body to react to caffeine withdrawal, so often; people will experience a Sunday headache that is actually related to withdrawal from caffeine. It may be beneficial for the person to cut down on caffeine while at work during the week.

***Menstrual** headaches are found in 60% of the 10 million women who experience migraine headaches. Even women, who do not experience migraine headaches, may experience a tension related headache right before or during the beginning of their menstrual cycle. Some authors believe that birth control pills can aggravate menstrual related headaches.

***Temporal Arteritis** headaches are common in women over the age of 50. It is usually classified by symptoms of burning or jabbing pain in the temporal region caused by inflamed arteries in the head and neck. Medical treatment is necessary for this type of headache, otherwise blindness or stroke may result.

***Over exertion** headaches may develop after strenuous exertion with aerobic exercises, sexual activities, coughing or laughing. About 1 in 10 cases will have a physical cause related to a tumor or aneurysm. Most of these headaches will respond to aspirin or beta-blockers, however, once again, it is advised that you seek medical attention to determine the cause of the headache.

***TMJ** headaches are a result of dysfunction at the temporal mandibular joint (jaw joint). This can often occur after neck or jaw injuries. It can also be related to emotional stress, misaligned teeth, clenching of the jaw, chronic neck dysfunction and poor posture. Usually a team approach to the rehabilitation of TMJ will include your dentist and physical therapist.

Other possible reasons for headaches:

-High heels which create poor posture.

-Over exposure to the sun which causes dehydration of the fluids in the spinal column and brain which causes a headache.

-A headache which occurs at the back of the head and is worse in the morning may be related to high blood pressure. This type of headache will improve as the day goes on and it is not the same as a tension headache, which usually gets worse as the day goes on.

SEEK HELP IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HAPPENS:

- You have a severe headache with a fever and a stiff neck that resists moving forward. This can be symptoms of meningitis and requires quick medical attention. -Any headaches that cause difficulty with speech, double vision, paralysis, loss of balance or vomiting should be considered serious.
- A constant headache that builds over a course of several days or weeks should receive medical attention.
- For more information contact the Headache Association at 1-800-255-ACHE.