

Headaches and Migraine

Headaches afflict almost everyone at some time or the other. Most headaches are functional, caused by temporary upsets and are not related to any organic changes in the brain. A headache is often nature's warning that something is wrong somewhere in the body. The actual pain, however, arises from irritation to nerve endings in the shoulder, neck and scalp muscles and also in the smooth muscles encircling the blood vessels which serve these areas. There are several types of headaches, with as many ways of treating them. Taking an aspirin or tranquilizer may provide temporary relief but it does not remove the cause. Moreover, the frequent use of pain-relievers causes nervous debility, weakens the heart and brings on other complications.

Treatment

1. The common causes of headaches are allergy, emotional reasons, eyestrain, high blood pressure, hangover, infection, low blood sugar, nutritional deficiency, tension, the presence of poisons and toxins in the body, and migraine. Allergies, an often unsuspected cause of headache, vary in different individuals. The foods to which some people are allergic and which can trigger headaches are milk and milk products, chocolates, chicken liver, alcohol and strong cheese. Sneezing and diarrhoea are further indications of an allergy.
2. Intense emotions often cause headaches. Many people who outwardly appear to have a pleasant disposition may actually be simmering about a job, or may bear resentment towards a person or something. This hidden hostility may manifest itself as headache. It is important, therefore, that negative feelings should not be bottled up, but should find some safe means of expressions.
3. Eye-strain is a common cause of headache. IN such cases, an eye specialist should be consulted and proper treatment taken. Simple eye exercises such as moving the eyes up and down and from side to side, palming, rotating the head, with neck outstretched, forward and backward three times, then thrice clockwise and thrice anti-clockwise , can relieve eye-strain.
4. High blood pressure can cause pounding headaches. The headache usually starts at the back of the head on getting up in the morning. A safe method of treatment for this is to immerse your legs to calf-level in a tub of hot water for 15 to 20 minutes. This draws the blood away from the head and down to the feet, giving relief from the headache.
5. Many people get a severe headache after consuming alcohol in excess. Alcohol causes the blood vessels to swell, resulting in a painful headache. The best treatment for this is to avoid excessive consumption of alcohol. A hangover headache can be avoided by taking a vitamin B-1 (thiamine) tablet with the drink.

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6. Headaches may occur if there is an infection, such as a cold, virus and fever. Here, it is the infection that should be tackled. Vitamin C therapy is the best all round method. For a cold, high doses of vitamin C should be taken at hourly intervals with the appearance of the first symptoms like a sore throat, runny nose, etc. Vitamin C has worked miracles, and is considered a natural antibiotic.
7. Low blood sugar is one of the causes of irritability and headache. Sugar is not a cure for low blood sugar, though it may raise the blood sugar temporarily and make one feel better for a while. Low blood sugar is the result of an abused pancreas which over stimulates the production of insulin in the body. It can be controlled by eating smaller meals at short intervals rather than the standard three large meals daily. The intake of carbohydrates should be cut down to the minimum and coffee should be eliminated as it over stimulates the pancreas.
8. A lack of iron, resulting in anaemia, is a common cause of headache. The headache sometimes appears before the onset of anaemia, due to a chronic iron deficiency. Brewer's yeast is an excellent source of iron and anaemia can easily be prevented by taking a few teaspoons daily. Headache can also be brought on due to the deficiency of B vitamins, namely pantothenic acid, B-1 (thiamine) , B-12 and B-6 (pyridoxine) and can be cured by taking these vitamins.
9. The best remedy to prevent headaches is to build up physical resistance through proper nutrition, exercise and constructive thinking. As a first step, the patient should undertake a short fast. During the fast, citrus fruit juices, diluted with water may be taken six times daily. By taking the load of digestion, the patient will at once save nervous energy which can be utilized for more important purposes. The blood and lymph will also be relieved of a great burden. After a short fast, the diet should be fixed in such a way as to put the least possible strain on the digestion. Breakfast should consist of fruits, both fresh and dried. Lunch should consist largely of protein foods. Starchy foods such as whole wheat bread, cereals, rice or potatoes should be taken at dinner along with raw salads. Spices, tomatoes, sour buttermilk and oily foodstuffs should be avoided. Drinking a glass of water (warm water in winter and cool water in summer) mixed with a teaspoonful of honey the first thing in the morning, is also a good remedy.

Water Treatment

There are certain water applications which help relieve headaches. Copious drinking of water can help, as do the cleansing enema with water temperature at 98.6 ° F, the hot foot bath, a cold throat pack, frequent applications of towels wrung out from very hot water to the back of the neck, a cold compress at 40 ° to 60° F applied to the head and face or an alternate spinal compress. Hot fomentations over the abdominal region just before retiring relieve headaches due

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to stomach and liver upsets. Yogic kriyas like jalneti and kunjla, pranayamas like anuloma-viloma, shitali and sitkari and asanas such as uttanapadasana, sarvangasana, paschimottanasana, halasana and shavasana are useful in the treatment of headaches.

Reference

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