

Finding Natural Solutions to

Migraine Pain

This Pain Has a Name

There are headaches, and then there are the real doozies we call *migraines*. Migraines are an assault on the whole body.

Migraine headaches occur when blood vessels of the head expand and irritate nearby nerves. Some migraines are preceded by warning symptoms—such as visual and mental disturbances, fatigue, restlessness or euphoria. Severe, debilitating head pain—typically one-sided and pounding—can last for hours or days, often accompanied by nausea, lack of appetite, digestive upsets, mental dullness, and supersensitivity to light and sound.

Taking the Mystery Out of Migraine

There are many triggers to migraine, including food allergies, too much caffeine, fat and sugar, sticky blood platelets, birth control pills, regular hormonal up's and down's, lack of friendly intestinal

flora, liver congestion, over-use of drugs and withdrawal from them, magnesium deficiency, changes in barometric pressure.

The overuse of certain drugs (including pain relief medications), the rebound effect of using these drugs, and withdrawal from them can all cause migraines! In fact, 70% of patients with chronic daily headaches suffer from pain actually caused by analgesics and ergotamine medications.



There is some evidence that migraine patients have an inherited abnormality in the way nerves control the expansion and contraction of blood vessels. Other research points to platelet disorders, serotonin deficiency, nerve disorders caused by chronic stress, and combinations of all of the above.

The good news is that migraines can be successfully treated by natural healing methods.

There are many natural healing modalities that alleviate migraine pain and reduce frequency.

Because all of the drugs currently prescribed for migraine pain have significant side effects, most migraine sufferers are encouraged to find the right combination of diet, lifestyle, herbs and healing techniques which will work as well as the medications—without the side effects.

Migraine pain itself is not life threatening, although it may *feel* like a near-death experience. Any severe head pain must be taken seriously and checked out by your primary health care provider.

KNOW WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP.

The nutritional suggestions in this material are meant to be used in conjunction with the services of a trained, licensed healthcare practitioner. Individuals already under a physician's care should seek the advice of their physician before taking supplements or beginning an exercise program.

Natural Treatment of Migraine

Use a Migraine Diary to Get to Know Yourself Better

The first step to effective natural migraine control is to identify the particular stresses that trigger your migraines.

Keep a diary for 2 -3 months, tracking diet, medications, sleep and exercise patterns, menstrual cycles, stressful events, changes of weather—all in relation to when you have migraine head pain.

Pay careful attention to the list of substances which are known to trigger migraines (see right) in many other people. When you have a headache, check the list to see if you have consumed any of those substances and make note in your diary.

Diet Control

Food allergy or intolerance is the most common trigger for migraines.

Many trigger foods contain histamine or other compounds which set off a chain reaction of blood vessel contraction, then dilation, then pain.

Using your Migraine Diary, develop a list of your particular triggers so that you will know which natural treatments will help.

Eliminate trigger foods from your diet for one to two months. Continue to track frequency of migraines and compare with previous diary. You may find that under certain situations you can tolerate migraine trigger foods. At other times (premenstrually, for instance) you must avoid them.

As a general rule, avoid animal products (particularly red meat and dairy products) in order to reduce the arachidonic acid levels which contribute to inflammation.

Migraine Trigger Foods and Substances

Red wine and beer
Cow's milk
Wheat and rye
Chocolate
Eggs
Citrus, particularly sour oranges
Soy sauce
Benzoic acid (a food preservative)
Cheese
Tomatoes, pepper, eggplant
Tartrazine (yellow food coloring)
Peanuts
MSG (monosodium glutamate)
Coffee and black tea
Yeast
Pickled fish and shellfish
Aged and smoked meats and other nitrates

Opt for Natural Pain Control

What worked well for a few headaches may now be causing you to have more head pain. Acetaminophen is especially hard on the liver and is well known for its rebound effects. Codeine causes constipation, lowers pain tolerance, and is addictive to boot!

Instead of medicating yourself to the hilt and stumbling through your normal routine, make an effort to alter your lifestyle so that you can take time off for migraines.

Sometimes simply retiring to a dark room and falling asleep will do the trick. Try napping upright.

Put an ice pack on the back of the neck and/or a hot water bottle on the face and hands.

Put feet in cold water to draw blood from the head.

Pull congestion from the head by warming the hands.

Briskly rub ear lobes and nose. Rub all around the ear shell.

Massage temples for 5 minutes. Breathe deeply. Do 10 neck rolls.

Hold hand open, palm down; massage flesh between thumb and forefinger with other hand.

Chiropractics, acupuncture, massage, yoga, regular exercise and meditation can have tremendous results and will teach you much about your body and energy flow.

Constitutional homeopathic treatment offers a deep healing which can eliminate the tendency towards migraines.

Ask Ellen about:

Homeopathic remedies for acute headache pain.

Constitutional homeopathic treatment which can heal the underlying cause of migraine.

Herbal pain relievers which have been used successfully for ages: feverfew, ginkgo biloba, ginger.

Supplements which inhibit blood platelet aggregation.

Supplements which suppress the prostaglandins which contribute to inflammation.

Magnesium or B-vitamin Therapy.

Analyzing your Migraine Diary for nutrient deficiencies, hormonal imbalances, histamine reactions, food allergies—all of which may be contributing to your migraines.

Ellen Coleman, CN, HMC
Classical Homeopath and
Certified Nutritionist
P. O. Box 124
Mt. Shasta City, CA 96067
By appointment.
530/859-2703