



Discover Life Chiropractic

Better Health Naturally

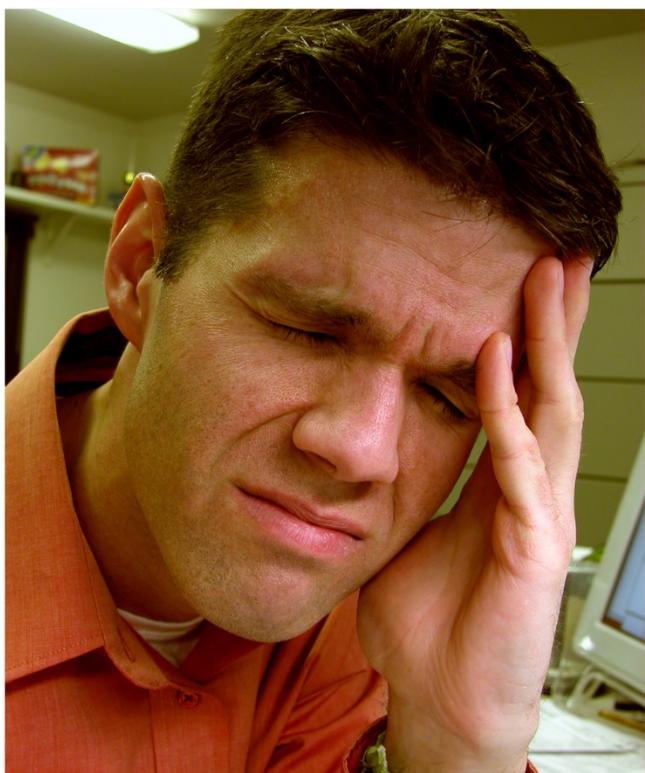
# Combat Headaches through Chiropractic Therapy

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## Combat Headaches through Chiropractic Therapy

Headaches affect millions of people all around the world. It can also be caused by many factors and can vary in severity from mild pain to unbearable pain. A headache is also referred to as a cephalgia and is defined as an ache or pain in the head. While the condition is commonly associated with a variety of diseases and ailments, a headache can strike without warning even in patients who are not suffering from any diseases. Medical experts have divided headaches into different types in order to provide assistance with diagnosing and treating each kind of headache more effectively. This also helps patients in identifying the type of headache they have and can assist with determining whether or not a visit to a doctor's office is required.

### Global Prevalence of Headaches



Headaches are known to be the most common type of neurological disorder. The condition affects at least 50% of the global population at any given time and patients affected by this condition often report experiencing headaches throughout their entire lifetime. In Australia, at least 23% of all households have one or more patients suffering from migraine attacks and there are approximately seven million patients in the country that suffer from tension-type headaches on a regular basis. It is also reported that

more than 10 million patients in the United Kingdom suffer from some type of headache on a regular basis. Headache & Migraine News

Australia also claims that the majority of headache cases account for patients aged between 25 years and 44 years.

With these figures in mind, it is important to focus on the effect of headaches on a person's quality of life. It is reported that 91% of patients suffering a migraine attack are unable to continue normal functionality at work or at home. It is also reported that 53% of these cases lead to bedrest and severe symptoms. Migraine is also reported as the 7<sup>th</sup> most common cause for disability throughout the entire world and migraine also ranks in the top 20 diseases accounting for years of healthy life lost due to disabling effects.

## Types of Headaches

While a headache generally affects the head, numerous types of headaches have been identified, each with its own symptoms and severity. Medical scientists have identified a total of five different types of headaches, including the symptoms, causes and diagnosis of each.

- **Tension Headaches** – This is the most common type of headache and usually feels like pressure around the head. Tension headaches can also appear as constant aches around the head. The focus of the pain is usually around the back of the head, the neck and at the temples on the head. These headaches are usually not too severe and they are not likely to have a large impact on quality of life or the ability to perform certain tasks. Tension headaches can usually be treated with aspirin, Tylenol or ibuprofen; although an array of other over-the-counter drugs are also available to assist with the relief of such a headache.

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- **Sinus Headaches** – These headaches are usually caused by a sinus infection and occur when sinus becomes inflamed. A fever accompanies sinus headaches on most occasions. The condition can be treated with numerous types of medication including decongestants, antibiotics and antihistamines.
- **Rebound Headaches** – This type of headache is caused by the overuse of painkillers. Many over-the-counter and prescription drugs can cause this effect. There are different theories as to why rebound headaches occur, but no definite cause has been identified as yet. Medical scientists believe that either the headaches are triggered when the brain shifts into an excited state due to an overuse of pain medication, or it occurs as a withdrawal symptom when the pain medication starts to flow out of the bloodstream. Some common pain medications that can lead to rebound headaches include aspirin, ibuprofen and Tylenol.
- **Cluster Headaches** – These headaches are recurring and they can occur in cycles or in groups. They usually appear suddenly and the patient experiences debilitating pain on a single side of the face.



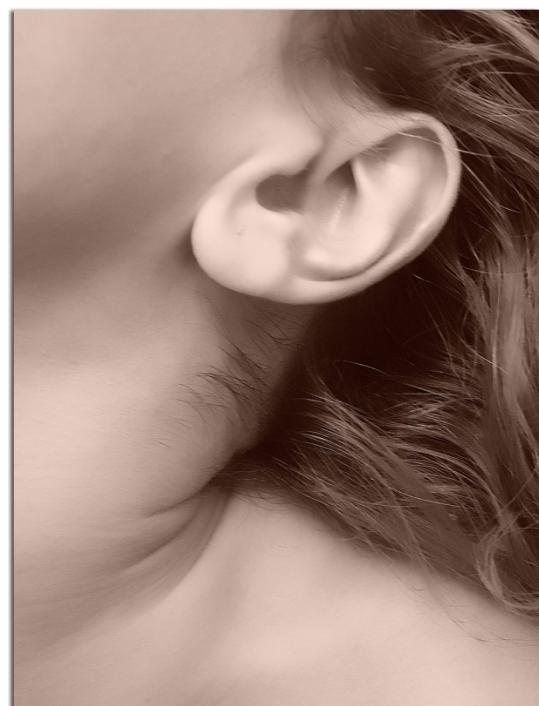
Symptoms that are commonly associated with cluster headaches include nasal congestion, watery eyes and a runny nose. These symptoms occur on the same side of the face as the headache. Cluster headaches are known to cause an uncomfortable and

restless feeling in the patient and have been linked to genetic components. While a cure has not been developed for this type of headache, several drugs are available to assist with reducing the duration of each attack, as well as reduce the frequency of the attacks.

- **Migraine Headaches** – This type of headache can be extremely disabling. While it is not as common as a tension headache, there are still millions who experience this severe form of a headache each day. Migraines are also known to run in families. The diagnosis of this condition is usually made according to very specific criteria. When a patient has at least five attacks that last between four to 72 hours, they might be diagnosed with a migraine. Doctors will usually continue to determine if the patient also showcases at least two of the following symptoms: throbbing pain, moderate or severe pain, one-sided pain and pain that limits the patient's abilities to perform daily activities. Nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to both lights and sound are also present in many patients diagnosed with this condition.

## Headache Sources

Apart from the fact that medical research has identified different types of headaches, further studies have found several sources for these types of headaches. Some headaches are present in the skull, while others stretch towards the neck and other parts of the upper body. Cervicogenic headaches are one such example which is the result of spinal problems in the neck area. These headaches can be caused by spinal misalignment, increased muscle tension,



or when injury to the neck occurs. It is reported that these headaches are experienced at the back of the head and the pain can spread towards the upper part of the skull, as well as to the forehead. Discomfort and pain in the neck is also associated with cervicogenic headaches.

The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association reports that cervicogenic headaches are usually referred to the head from two major parts of the neck – either the bony structures or the soft tissues. They also report that the nerve fibers located in the upper cervical spinal cord region interacts with sensory fibers that are located in the upper cervical roots. This is believed to be the way painful sensations are referred in two ways between the head and the neck. They also report findings on a study conducted among participants suffering from migraine attacks. Altered neck posture, muscle tenderness, dislocation of joints and the presence of myofascial trigger points were all reported to be present within the patients with migraine attacks, while the specific findings were not present in patients who did not report migraine attacks.

Reeves & Swenson reports the pain-sensitive intracranial structures to include the meningeal arteries, parts of the cerebral arteries, venous sinuses, numerous cranial and cervical nerves, as well as dura, which is found at the base of the brain.

When spinal misalignments (subluxations) in the upper cervical spine are identified and treated by a chiropractor, they tend to irritate four specific muscles due to the fact that these muscles are attached to these vertebrae.

- **Splenius Muscles** – This group of muscles consists of the splenius capitis and splenius cervicus. The splenius capital runs from the upper back to the base of the skull, while the splenius cervicis runs from the upper back to the upper cervical vertebrae. These muscles can cause a headache pain that travels throughout the head, as well as to the back of the eyes.

- **Suboccipitals** – This group contains a total of four individual muscles that provide proper movement. The muscles are found between the base of the skull and the first cervical vertebra. Headache pains caused by these muscles feel like they are inside the head and often travel toward the back of the eyes.
- **Sternocleidomastoid** – This muscle is attached to the sternum and runs through the neck, behind the ear and reaches the base of the skull. Visual disturbances, referred pain and problems with overall balance are commonly associated with headache pain caused by this muscle.
- **Trapezius** – A large muscle that is found in the upper and mid back of the skull. Headache pain caused by this muscle can travel towards the jaw, temple, back of the head and can even lead to tooth pain.

## **Chiropractor's Role in Relieving Headaches**

Chiropractors have been used for an array of health problems that relates to the spine. Through proper adjustment of the spine, pain and many other ailments can be effectively alleviated. One popular technique that provides relief of headaches is the Blye Cranial Technique. This technique directly addresses the cranial subluxations and is a power technique for spinal chiropractic care. The technique uses a reactive leg length testing process and a patient assisted challenging for the diagnosis. The diagnosis assists the chiropractor with identifying the precise location of the subluxation. Once identified, the chiropractor can use an adjustment instrument in order to make adjustments to the cranial subluxations in a safe and natural manner.



## Conclusion

A headache attack can happen at any time, even when in the most important meeting of your life. Getting a headache evaluation by a chiropractor is a must in order to get effective relief. At Discover Life Chiropractic we evaluate your spinal alignment, posture, and neurologic tension in order to formulate an effective treatment plan. Then using regular chiropractic care, Blye Cranial technique, and exercise we can attack the spinal cause of your headache. With over 25 years of success don't hesitate to give us a call at 472-4400 and get your life back.

## Resources

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/73936.php>

<http://www.iasp-pain.org/files/Content/ContentFolders/GlobalYearAgainstPain2/HeadacheFactSheets/1-Epidemiology.pdf>

<http://headacheaustralia.org.au/what-is-headache/prevalence-and-cost-of-headache/>

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/headache/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<http://www.headache.com.au/faqs-headache-migraines-bureau-of-statistics-data/>

<https://www.theraspecs.com/blog/facts-and-statistics-for-migraine-and-headache-disorders/>

<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20484672,00.html/view-all#migraine-headaches-0>

<http://www.precisionneurosurgery.com.au/services/multidisciplinary-clinics/headache-clinic/conditions-treated/cervicogenic-headaches>

[https://www.dartmouth.edu/~dons/part\\_2/chapter\\_18.html](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~dons/part_2/chapter_18.html)

<http://jaoa.org/article.aspx?articleid=2093083>