



Your Headache and Your Neck Subluxations Might be Connected.

Chiropractic Care Produces Long – Term Results in Patients with Headache

A February, 2001, report from the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research finds that chiropractic patients not only experience improvement in the frequency and severity of their headaches while under chiropractic care, but continue to experience these benefits even if their care program is interrupted.

The study, a literature review performed at Duke University in Durham, NC, collected information from more than 2500 sources and compared how patients with different types of headache responded to such approaches as chiropractic, acupuncture, drug therapy, exercise and relaxation techniques.

According to the report, adjustments “appeared to result in immediate improvement in headache severity” in patients experiencing cervicogenic headache. The report went on to say that when compared with soft-tissue therapies such as massage, chiropractic resulted in “sustained improvement in headache frequency and severity.”

When the researchers compared how patients under chiropractic responded with patients taking the drug amitriptyline, a common headache drug, both had about the same immediate effect. However, patients who took the drug experienced some type of adverse effect 82% of the time.

During the four-week period after the study ended, the patients who had received chiropractic care experienced significant improvement in both headache frequency and

severity. The headaches of the patients taking the drug returned to the same frequency and severity they experienced before the study.

By way of commentary, this report shows that chiropractic care allows the body to function better, which allows true healing to take place. Drugs, on the other hand, tend to simply cover up the problem. Making symptoms disappear does not mean that true healing is taking place. True healing takes place when the body is restored to its highest level of function.

Why People are Suffering from Headaches . . . and Never Get Results

If you are one of the 80 million Americans needlessly suffering from headaches, don't feel alone! Headaches are not "just one of those normal things that happens to us."

All your "traditionally" trained doctors give you is drugs, drugs and more drugs! This course of action is barbarically outdated But has your doctor changed? No! Don't get me wrong they mean you no harm, but they just don't know what else to do for you.

Fact: Drugs don't and can't fix the cause of your headache pain. Drugs block out the symptoms, only to let the real problem worsen without you noticing. Look, if your house is on fire, do you want to shut off the fire alarm while it burns? I think you get it.

Chiropractic care has been proven by many researchers ... but as of now, recently by a group of doctors at a leading university ... to be the answer to ending your headaches!!!

Dr. Rothbart and his research team have said that chiropractic researchers have always held the explanation for the cause of most headaches. Dr. Rothbart states, "Until recently, the medical understanding of headaches has not looked at the chiropractic explanation for the cause of headaches." He also states, "Chiropractors have been right all along." Dr. Rothbart specifically termed this result as ... a minor miracle!

Fact: Drs. Rothbart, Mersky, and Bogduck (all M.D.'s) state, "This situation creates an enormous problem in addressing the diagnosis and treatment of headaches; since most physicians are unfamiliar with this category of headache, proper diagnosis is rare. There is a large portion of headache sufferers that go through life with the wrong diagnosis and the wrong treatment for their headaches.

Migraines Respond to Chiropractic Care

An Australian study published in the "February, 2000 issue of the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics found that migraine headache patients experienced significant relief under chiropractic care.

Over a six-month period, 83 people with clinically diagnosed migraines kept headache diaries for a two-month period before beginning chiropractic care, during a two-month-long period of chiropractic adjustments, and during a two-month period after care ended. Forty people were placed in a control group that received no chiropractic care.

In general, the participants in the study reported a significant decrease in the frequency, duration, disability and amount of medicine they used compared with people in the control group who did not receive chiropractic care.

50% percent of the participants receiving chiropractic care reported significant improvement in the morbidity (sickness) level of their migraines. 22% percent of the participants reported more than a 90% reduction of their migraines as a result of the adjustments.

By way of commentary, a March 2, 2000 report from the National Headache Foundation says that 12% of the public suffers from migraine headaches. This figure represents approximately 30 million people. Using the numbers from this study, approximately 6.6 million (22%) of these people could reduce the occurrence of their migraines by 90% if

they got under chiropractic care. Another 15 million could report significant improvement. Talk about making the world a better place to live!

This study is a good example of how chiropractic care plays a vital role in restoring a patient's health. When a chiropractor removes interference to the nervous system by adjusting the spine, health is restored and the body is in a better position to heal itself.

Headaches: The Spinal Connection

Chances are you – or somebody you love – battle chronic headaches: the pounding, relentless, pain capable of sidelining work and leisure activities. Fortunately, there's new hope for headache sufferers. Cutting'-edge research reveals that chiropractic care alleviates most types of head-related pain, including tension headache, cervicogenic headache (commonly associated with neck problems) and migraine.

Why is chiropractic such an effective solution to headaches? Because Dr. Borio goes to the source of head pain rather than masking symptoms with medications, which may have hazardous side effects. According to Dr. Borio, the root of many headache sufferers' pain lies not in their head but in the spine of their neck. Specifically, scientific studies indicate that a common spinal condition, called vertebral subluxation, is the hidden cause of many patients' pain. The good news is that chiropractic care safely and effectively corrects this disorder and the pain associated with it. Read on to learn how your head pain may have a spinal connection and how chiropractic may be the solution you've been searching for.

What is a vertebral subluxation?

A vertebral subluxation is an area in the spine where movement is restricted or bones (vertebrae) are out of alignment. In patients with headaches, vertebral subluxations are often identified in the spine of the neck (cervical spine) – and are frequently associated with a straightening or reversal of the neck's natural curve ("military neck"). Vertebral

subluxations are triggered by a myriad of elements such as poor posture, inadequate exercise and emotional stress.

How do vertebral subluxations cause headache?

The spinal column consists of a series of bones (vertebrae) stacked one on top of the other. These vertebrae are separated by gel-like intervertebral discs, which absorb shock and provide cushioning. Tendons and muscles connect the vertebrae of the spine with the muscles of the back, neck and head. Through the center of the spinal column runs the spinal cord, a primary component of the central nervous system that joins the brain around nose-level. Nerves extend out from the spinal cord between vertebrae – transmitting information to and from structures throughout the body and the brain.

Scientific research indicates that vertebral subluxations trigger headache. (See reverse side of this handout for a sampling of research linking vertebral subluxations with head pain.) But what accounts for this association? Researchers have uncovered two possible explanations: muscular dysfunction and nerve interference.

Muscular Dysfunction Theory

Studies show that vertebral subluxations alter muscular functioning, in turn spurring muscle tension and pain. Because muscles and tendons connect vertebrae in the neck with the head, it's easy to visualize how a misaligned vertebrae in the neck or upper back – or a group of misaligned vertebrae – can

set off a chain reaction that disrupts muscular integrity in the head, spawning pain. This connection between the spine and the muscles of the back, head and neck explains why headache pain is often accompanied by muscular soreness in the neck or upper back.

Nerve Interference Theory

Because the spinal cord courses through the spinal column, and the spinal column is comprised of individual vertebrae, researchers theorize that vertebral subluxations may interfere with nerve flow. Specifically, vertebral subluxations may inhibit transmission between the nerves that emerge between'

vertebrae, the spinal cord and the brain. In this way, vertebral subluxations in the upper back or neck may disrupt nerve flow to the brain, a phenomenon seen in some types of headache.

How does chiropractic care eliminate the spinal triggers of headache?

Chiropractic care eliminates the source of head pain by correcting vertebral subluxations. To accomplish this, chiropractors apply a gentle force to the spine called a chiropractic adjustment. These maneuvers effectively restore movement and alignment to the dysfunctional vertebrae.

Headaches & Chiropractic

If you have a headache, you're not alone. Nine out of ten Americans suffer from headaches. Some are occasional, some frequent, some are dull and throbbing, and some cause debilitating pain and nausea.

What do you do when you suffer from a pounding headache? Do you grit your teeth and carry on? Lie down? Pop a pill and hope the pain goes away? There is a better alternative.

Research shows that spinal manipulation – the primary form of care provided by doctors of chiropractic – may be an effective treatment option for tension headaches and headaches that originate in the neck.

A report released in 2001 by researchers at the Duke University Evidence-Based Practice Center in Durham, NC, found that spinal manipulation resulted in almost

immediate improvement for those headaches that originate in the neck, and had significantly fewer side effects and longer-lasting relief of tension-type headache than a commonly prescribed medication.

Also, a 1995 study in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* found that spinal manipulative therapy is an effective treatment for tension headaches and that those who ceased chiropractic treatment after four weeks experienced a sustained therapeutic benefit in contrast with those patients who received a commonly prescribed medication.

Headache Triggers

Headaches have many causes, or “triggers.” These may include foods, environmental stimuli (noises, lights, stress, etc.) and/or behaviors (insomnia, excessive exercise, blood sugar changes, etc.). About 5 percent of all headaches are warning signals caused by physical problems.

Ninety-five percent of headaches are primary headaches, such as tension, migraine, or cluster headaches. These types of headaches are not caused by disease. The headache itself is the primary concern.

“The greatest majority of primary headaches are associated with muscle tension in the neck,” says Dr. George B. McClelland, a doctor of chiropractic from Christiansburg, VA. “Today, Americans engage in more sedentary activities than they used to, and more hours are spent in one fixed position or posture. This can increase joint irritation and muscle tension in the neck, upper back and scalp, causing your head to ache.”

What Can You Do?

The ACA suggests the following:

- If you spend a large amount of time in one fixed position, such as in front of a computer, on a sewing machine, typing or reading, take a break and stretch every 30 minutes to one hour. The stretches should take your head and neck through a comfortable range of motion.
- Low-impact exercise may help relieve the pain associated with primary headaches. However, if you are prone to dull, throbbing headaches, avoid heavy exercise. Engage in such activities as walking and low-impact aerobics.
- Avoid teeth clenching. The upper teeth should never touch the lowers, except when swallowing. This results in stress at the temporomandibular joints (TMJ) – the two joints that connect your jaw to your skull – leading to TMJ irritation and a form of tension headaches.
- Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day to help avoid dehydration, which can lead to headaches.

What Can a Doctor of Chiropractic Do?

Dr. McClelland says your doctor of chiropractic may do one or more of the following if you suffer from a primary headache:

- Perform spinal manipulation or chiropractic adjustments to improve spinal function and alleviate the stress on your system.
- Provide nutritional advice, recommending a change in diet and perhaps the addition of B complex vitamins.
- Offer advice on posture, ergonomics (work postures), exercises and relaxation techniques. This advice should help to relieve the recurring joint irritation and tension in the muscles of the neck and upper back.

“Doctors of chiropractic undergo extensive training to help their patients in many ways – not just back pain,” says Dr. McClelland. “They know how tension in the spine relates to problems in other parts of the body, and they can take steps to relieve those problems.”

Introduction to Headaches

Headaches are an incredibly common occurrence for the majority of us and according to the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), 90% of all people will experience at least one headache in the next year alone. Luckily for us, of that 90% only 1% of all headaches experienced will be emergency-related (from stroke, hemorrhage, aneurysm, etc.). In this article we'll be discussing the top four headaches, which comprise 95% of all headaches, but before we do there's an important point we'd like to make: headaches are a nuisance, no one would disagree with that statement, but they are also a signal from our bodies communicating vital information; taking the opportunity to assess why the body is sending us this signal is important in breaking the cycle of treating the symptoms of a headache rather than the root cause. There is no fault in wanting to get out of pain and in taking medication from time-to-time, but taking medications on a regular basis for symptoms which pop up frequently is ignoring the vital message sent from our bodies and, at the very least, keeping us in a state of living our lives around pain rather than omitting the pain from our lives altogether.

Headaches are as unique as you or I and come in many shapes and sizes. The four most common headaches people experience are:

- Tension Headache
- Migraine Headache
- Cluster Headache
- Sinus Headache

What can Chiropractic do for Headaches?

Better alignment of the spine, which translates to better posture, balance, muscle tone, and less pain-helping those with headaches and TMJ, among many other conditions

- Decisions surrounding food and nutrition-knowing which foods to take in and which foods contribute to headaches and pain is important in addressing the cause of your headaches
- Stretches and exercises to build weaker muscles, improve posture, balance, and muscle tone, and decrease pain-a sedentary lifestyle lacking motion is a primary cause of pain and headaches
- A more ideal ergonomic blueprint for your workstation, helping to put you in a position that will help you avoid pain and headaches

Stress management-a factor present to all four of the most common headaches people typically suffer from Tension Headache.

Symptoms

- Band-like pain that starts at the base of the skull and wraps its way around the head-this headache is related to increased tension in the muscles in the shoulder, neck, and head
- The pain is typically worse at the end of the day and can occur daily, as this headache is related to daily stresses which can be inflicted on us with great regularity
- Tension Headaches comprise 90% of all headaches

Causes

- The most common cause of tension headache is stress from lack of movement, keeping yourself in a position of poor posture for prolonged periods of time on a daily basis (e.g. poor office ergonomics)
- Tension headaches can also be related to a stressful emotional or physical event and to TMJ/TMJD (Temporomandibular Joint Disorder) from gritting your teeth or pressure in the joint from joint misalignment in the temporomandibular joint (jaw)

Medication-Free Therapies

- Chiropractic is very effective for patients with Tension Headaches and many other headaches for that matter, as it aids in relieving tension in the neck, shoulders, and head which is often a main contributor to headaches; chiropractic is also ideal for treating the effects of TMJ as this is often due to joint misalignment (subluxation) and tight muscles in the jaw region.
- Better ergonomics and posture is crucial if your work environment is the culprit for your headaches; consider using a palates' ball at your work station to improve posture and strengthen core muscles.
- Stretches and exercises for the neck, shoulders, and head can improve posture and decrease pain from tension and other headaches, since prolonged immobility is a big factor in muscle tightness and spasm.
- Other holistic therapies, such as massage and acupuncture, has been proven effective in relieving tension in the neck and shoulders associated with tension headaches as well.

Migraine Headache

Symptoms

Migraines are typically on one side of the head, but can be on both sides-the pain is pulsating or throbbing in nature and can lead to: nausea and vomiting, a desire to avoid lights or loud sounds, malaise, and visual disturbances

In the majority of cases there is increased muscle tension present in the shoulders, neck, and base of the skull which contribute to the symptoms and manifestation of pain

Causes

- There is a genetic connection with migraines; however, environmental factors are often the triggers for migraine headaches

- Certain foods may trigger migraines, such as: caffeine, MSG, aspartame, alcohol, processed meats, and many more...
- Environmental factors and emotional factors can play a role as well, such as exhaust from cars, smoke, perfumes, and stress or stressful events in our lives

Medication-Free Therapies

- Discovering the foods, chemicals, stresses and other factors which trigger migraines is vital; note what you were doing or what environmental factors were at play 24 hours prior to having a migraine
- Developing a pattern for when you experience migraines is key to limiting their occurrence
- Cayenne pepper has been proven effective in limiting pain associated with migraines because it releases endorphins in the brain, natural pain-killers
- Chiropractic care for the release of tight muscles and muscle spasm, as well as putting the vertebra back into position of ideal alignment can have beneficial effects on migraine sufferers
- As a side note, it was once believed that migraines were caused by changes to bloodflow in the body (vascular changes), but it is now believed that migraines are caused by neurological changes or changes within the brain itself-which is why many medications used to treat migraines for years were, in some cases, actually causing headaches and other symptoms with continued patient use

Cluster Headache

Symptoms

- Non-throbbing pain which is located around the eye region, leading to tearing and sinus drainage, and often waking the sufferer at night

- These headaches occur several days in a row, lasting for minutes to hours, for up to a few weeks to a few months; then they go away for a period of time only to reemerge at a later date (episodic pain)

Causes

- Most common causes are alcohol and vasodilating drugs (drugs that cause arteries to expand, like nitroglycerine)
- Other causes include: cigarette smoke and nicotine, hydrocarbon exposure (e.g. perfumes, exhaust from cars, etc.), sleep or lack of sleep, dehydration and (of course) stress

Medication-Free Therapies

- Avoiding alcohol and certain drugs which may be triggering these headaches; avoidance of environmental triggers (smoke, perfumes, etc.); and stress management
- Drinking plenty of water-dehydration can have a significant effect on cluster headaches
- Oxygen therapy, such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy has been proven effective for cluster headaches-even aerobic exercise has been shown to decrease duration and intensity of cluster headaches because it increases oxygen saturation in the body

Tension in the neck, shoulders, and head is often present with cluster headaches and chiropractic care can help relieve some of the symptoms associated with cluster headaches

Sinus Headache

Symptoms

- Achy or dull pain that is caused by pressure over the sinus regions in the face-often affecting one side worse than the other
- There may be accompanying sinus drainage with headache and the possibility of fever if the sinus headache is related to infection

Causes

- Common causes can be indoor or outdoor inhalants. Outdoor triggers include: pollen, ragweed, and exhaust; indoor factors include: smoke, dust, chemicals, mold, and other contaminants from concentrated air recycled through ventilation systems
- Allergens can also expand to foods, leading to sinus headaches and sinusitis-such as dairy products and any refined food (especially refined sugar as it feeds bacteria and fungus and weakens the immune system)
- Sinus headaches can also be illness-related, as in the case of sinus infections or sinusitis (from viral, bacterial, or fungal invaders)

Medication-Free Therapies

- Increasing water consumption (especially hot water) is an excellent way to get the sinuses clear and mucus flowing out of the sinus region (water has natural expectorant properties)
- Also consider using a Neti pot to clear the nasal passages decreasing congestion and the effects of allergens and other nasal irritants
- If your headaches are due to indoor irritants, consider opening a window to circulate the air, clean your house or work-station on a regular basis, and/or consider getting a HEPA filter to remove allergens from the air (ionic filters produce ozone as a byproduct and can irritate the lungs, so HEPA is the preferred air purification system). Dust covers for your bedding and air ventilation filters are effective means to improve air quality and limit exposure to many triggers

- For outdoor allergens, consider taking a broad-spectrum antioxidant, drinking plenty of water, and avoiding common allergenic foods (dairy, wheat, corn, and soy are among the most common allergenic foods) which may be placing an increased burden on your body's ability to handle allergy season
- There are many in the alternative health community who tout cleanses (especially liver cleanses) as the only way to truly beat the effects of allergies and environmental irritants, but if you choose to go this route please make sure you are under the supervision of a qualified health professional

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