

## MANAGING MIGRAINES WITH CHIROPRACTIC

Migraine headaches have to be experienced to be understood in terms of the pain and discomfort they generate. If you have never suffered a migraine it is difficult to imagine the way it makes the victim feel! To get an idea, think of the worst headache you've had, multiply that several times and you'll have some idea. A migraine headache is thought to be a form of vascular headache whereby the blood vessels enlarge and release chemicals into the bloodstream. In turn these chemicals appear to activate the sympathetic nervous system in the body – believed to control responses to stress and pain.

The origin of a migraine headache is debatable and often depends on the individual. There can be many different and separate triggers that set off a migraine, some are connected with food, others are physical or nerve-related – even weather can play a part in triggering a migraine headache. There are a number of points to remember for limiting migraine attacks as much as possible:

- Do not skip meals and avoid prolonged fasting
- Identify and avoid foods that trigger headaches by keeping a diary – list what you eat and when a headache appears
- Limit caffeine consumption to less than two caffeine-containing drinks a day – if you must have any at all!
- Limit stress through regular exercise
- Avoid bright or flashing lights and wear sunglasses if sunlight is a trigger.
- Sleep and wake up at the same time each day – either too much or insufficient sleep can trigger a migraine headache
- Make a commitment to exercise and consult your chiropractor about other options to medication. Although still in their early days, clinical studies have shown that chiropractic care can arrest or at least alleviate the agony of migraine headaches. (Ref: <http://www.chiro.org/LINKS/headache.shtml#Migraine>. ) (Ref: <http://www.altmd.com/Articles/Chiropractic-and-Headaches>).

Through neck and spinal adjustments migraines are frequently reduced or even prevented. Nerves control vascular system tension - chiropractic adjustments reduce irritation of the nervous system, beginning with its roots in the spine; they can also help improve vascular flow.

A chiropractic practitioner will use a series of specific adjustments to improve neck and spinal function, reduce nerve irritation and relax muscle tension. Exercise, stretching, changes in posture and relaxation techniques are other possible procedures you may expect to be offered by your chiropractor to relieve your migraine headaches.

The main thing to remember is that the care for and alleviation of migraines, as with many other conditions, is very often successful as the result of a holistic approach to the problem. Nutritional supplements, vitamins, herbs, diet, adjustments, relaxation and exercise (in their appropriate places) all contribute to a healthy body as a whole.

