



# Headaches and Migraines

## The Answers are in the Neck, Stress, and Circulation

How has your head been feeling? The brain is an incredibly complex, sensitive, and often overworked part of the body. It can be affected by heat, toxins, hormones, lack of fluid, pressure, and many other factors. In fact, headaches are one of the most common health problems, with almost 90% of the population experiencing them occasionally. Symptoms can range from mild discomfort, to feeling like someone is putting an axe through your skull, and having to lock yourself in a dark room all day.

### Headaches

There are over 200 different causes of headaches, however over 85% of the cases that we see at the clinic involve stress and/ or neck problems. Other causes can include dehydration, toxic overload, high blood pressure, sinus, inflammation, medications, and food sensitivities. Most of the time a good massage will get rid of the headache and treat the neck problem or stress that caused it. However, if this doesn't help, if they keep coming back, or if you suspect something else may be causing your headaches, please book in for a Health Assessment at the clinic.

### Migraines

Some migraines can be completely debilitating. They usually show up as an intense, throbbing or pounding pain around one temple. (Sometimes the pain is located in the forehead, around the eye, or at the back of the head.) Some people experience visual disturbances before an attack, known as an 'aura'. When the migraine occurs, the sufferer may also experience nausea, vomiting, or sensitivity to light and sound, so they may want to lie in a quiet, dark room during an attack. A typical migraine lasts between 4 and 72 hours.

A migraine involves the vasodilation (expansion of blood vessels) in the brain. The enlargement of these blood vessels stretches the nerves that coil around them, and causes the nerves to release chemicals. These chemicals cause inflammation, pain, and further enlargement of the artery, making the pain even worse.

### Stopping migraines

To treat a migraine while it is happening, and to stop them coming back, it is important to do 5 things.

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*You know when you're tired and you feel lousy, you're in pain, or you have a health problem that just won't go away? Imagine bouncing out of bed in the morning, feeling on top of the world and thinking what a great day it is!*

To get your free 1 hr Health Assessment (valued at \$120), to find out how good you can really feel, please go to [www.cntc.com.au](http://www.cntc.com.au), or call us on **3376 6911**.



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1. **Identify any triggers** for the migraines. Many of our migraine clients are found to have food sensitivities. Exposure to chemicals (especially perfumes or petrol smells), alcohol, flashing lights, MSG, and many other factors can also trigger migraines.
2. **For long-term results, it is important to treat the way the body responds to these triggers.** For example, allergy testing and treatments may be crucial for some people. If chemicals, alcohol, smells, caffeine or smoking are triggers, a **thorough detox** (especially of the liver) is needed.
3. **Stress** is always a factor (though we have had some cases where our clients were not aware that they had high stress levels). Massage, acupuncture or supplements are used to calm and relax the nervous system.
4. As with headaches, there is **almost always a problem with the muscles or alignment of the neck.** Massage and acupuncture are the best options here.
5. **The circulation to the head and brain must be improved.** It is important to make sure that there is no build-up on the walls of the blood vessels (arteriosclerosis), such as cholesterol or calcium deposits. The general circulation to the head and brain also needs to be checked and treated. We carefully check for
  - any puffy or 'spongy' areas at the top of the head
  - any 'leathery' feeling in the skin at the back of the neck
  - tightness on the side of the neck, just above the hollow above the collar bone
  - any puffy, swollen feeling at the base of the back of the skull
  - tiny, congested blood vessels at the back of the ears

All of these indicate pressure on the blood vessels to or inside the head. Acupuncture treatments and herbs will help improve the blood flow in these cases.

Because this circulation disturbance causes less oxygen and nutrients to the brain, and a build-up of toxins in the area, it can also be a cause of **anxiety, depression, or foggy thinking.**

**Women who get headaches or migraines before their period** will have poor circulation in the neck or head. This is because of a natural build-up of blood volume in the body before a period, which puts extra pressure on the blood vessels and circulation in the body.

Remember that migraines are caused by the **pressure** in the head caused by over-expanded blood vessels. There is also a common migraine personality type- they are often responsible people, who put too much pressure on themselves.

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## Case Studies

### **Daily Severe Headaches due to Toxicity**

June (not her real name) came to the Clinic for treatment of intense headaches, which occurred daily, and were slowly getting worse. She received a number of treatments for her neck and stress, however there was only a slight improvement in the headaches.

June had been on medication for a thyroid problem most of her life. I wondered if the headaches were due to a build-up of the medication in her body. June's detox points were examined and found to be very painful, so I gave her an acupuncture detox treatment to clear out any chemical residue from the medication. At her next visit, she reported that she had experienced an even more intense headache after her treatment, but since then she had not had any headaches at all! The detox points were still a little tender, so they were treated a second time, and she hasn't needed to come back to the Clinic since.

(This case illustrates that, while neck problems and stress account for the vast majority of headaches, there are other headaches that require further investigation.)

### **Child with Daily Migraines**

Sara (not her real name) was 8 years old, and had been suffering daily migraines for the past 5 years! She was a 'high achiever', but the migraines made it difficult for her to concentrate, and affected her ability to function at school. The headaches also prevented her from participating in any physical activity. After 4 treatments with Nina the migraines have disappeared.

*If you suffer from regular headaches or from migraines, please book in for a Health Assessment. We can then let you know what is causing the problem, and how it can be fixed.*

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