



## **AdvaCare Clinics: Headache Relief from Chiropractic Adjustments**

Headaches are one of the most common complaints in society today and the fifth most common reason for outpatient medical care. People who have experienced an intense headache for a day or even a few hours know that it can feel like trying to navigate the world in a vise. Almost every movement you make and thought you have is excruciating.

Whatever the cause of your headaches, you are not alone. In the United States alone, over 45 million people experience chronic, recurring headaches. The World Health Organization includes headache among the top 10 causes of disability, and in women headache is among the top 5 with an impact similar to arthritis and diabetes and worse than asthma.

Headache pain may be extremely intense, but most headaches are unrelated to structural neurologic disease. While some are related to life-threatening disorders, the vast majority of headaches are chronic and not related to neurologic dysfunction. More than 300 conditions can produce headaches, and for that reason precisely determining the cause of this pain can be a daunting task.

### **Patient History and Exam**

The key to making any diagnosis about the cause of headache pain is first to obtain a thorough history from the patient. Details about the pain—such as when it started, where the pain is located, the quality of the symptoms, what makes it better or worse—are all pertinent. Other health conditions as well as life style choices may also be important headache contributing factors. The next step is to carefully examine the patient. You will be asked to give the specifics of your headaches, and our physicians will complete a medical history and physical exam. Additional testing such as a CT scan, an MRI or an EEG may be ordered.

### **Headache Classifications**

The International Headache Society has developed a headache classification system comprised of thirteen diagnostic groups. Divided into two major divisions of primary headache disorders and secondary headaches, types of headaches in both divisions are listed below. Individuals may experience multiple types of headaches. The headache pattern and intensity may also change over time.

### **Headache Classifications**

Primary headache disorders include:

- Migraine headache

- Tension headache cluster headache

Secondary headaches include headache associated with:

- Head injury
- Miscellaneous headaches not associated with a structural lesion
- Vascular disorders and nonvascular disorders (such as neoplasms)
- Substances or their withdrawal
- Noncephalic infection
- Metabolic disorders
- Disorders of other structures of the head such as the eyes, ears, and neck
- Cranial neuralgias

### **Treatment**

The type of headache and associated disabling symptoms determine the choice of treatment. Optimally, the treatment goal is to become headache free. However, when that is unlikely, the goal is to decrease the intensity as well as the frequency of the headaches. The most common types of headaches seen by healthcare providers include migraine headaches (with or without aura), tension headaches, and headaches of cervical muscular origin.

Migraine headaches affect twenty percent of the population. The headaches are treated in two ways. If the migraine is infrequent, treating single episodes with medication and non-medication therapies is preferable. If the migraines occur on a frequent or regular basis, prophylactic (preventive) management is needed. Treatment may include life style recommendations, daily medications, chiropractic and/or physical therapy.

Daily tension headaches are often treated effectively with stress reduction therapies and anti-depressant medication. Cervical muscular headaches often occur after a neck injury. The cause may be from any of the pain generating structures in the neck—torn muscles or ligaments, damage to joints, or from damage to the discs in the neck. These are often the components of pain that are referred to as “whiplash” injury. If cervical headaches don’t resolve within several weeks following the original trauma, aggressive intervention may be needed.

A report released 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. This includes migraine, tension and cluster headaches.

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.

Combining the very best of conventional medicine, cutting-edge diagnosis and treatment, and **holistic alternative therapies**, AdvaCare Clinic offers a team of Surgeons, Family Practice Physicians, Massage Therapists, Chiropractors, and Physical Therapists to help define and resolve these complex problems.

As a patient within AdvaCare Clinic, you benefit from a top-notch team who adopts a multidisciplinary approach to patient care. If your headaches are related to another problem, there will be constant communication between your Chiropractor and other members of the clinic.

Contact AdvaCare Clinic today at 952-835-6653. We'd like to sit down and discuss your unique situation.

