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FROM SEVERE MIGRAINES TO MINOR

# HEADACHES

Chiropractic Care as the Solution to Cephalalgia

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## Headaches and Their Causes

You have probably experienced them all: from a dull throb behind your eyes to a pounding, disorienting headache to an excruciatingly painful migraine. Each one of these headaches decreases your quality of life in some capacity. Even if the headache is minor, it is easy to see the ill effects it bears on your life. For example, you often become more irritable when suffering from a headache. Sometimes cephalalgia is so incapacitating that you cannot even focus on the task or person in front of you. Sadly, popping an Advil is not always the best answer. In fact, ibuprofen can seriously damage your digestive system, decrease kidney function, increase your blood pressure, and cause numerous other ill-side effects (Dignity Health Editorial Team 2019).

Then what is the answer? Well, in the chiropractic world, we look to the root cause of an issue to discover the fundamental solution. To find that root cause, we must locate and interpret the clues that the body provides. Symptoms and pain are simply the body's way of telling the individual that it has an issue. The body does not want us to cover up its pain signals but to follow them to the root cause of its SOS messages. Once chiropractors target the root cause, they can work to care for this issue from the inside out.



## Diagnosing Headaches

In order to find and care for the root cause, chiropractors must follow the symptoms to their source. The various pain signals that the body releases directly relate to different types of headaches. To begin the search for a solution, the chiropractor first diagnoses the type of headache. According to the American Chiropractic Association, there must be several key points of discussion before diagnosing which type of headache someone is suffering from.

These are:

1. Where is the location of the headache?
2. What day and time does it occur?
3. What does it feel like?
4. What activity or event brings it on?
5. What is the length of the headache?
6. What makes it feel better or worse?

Once the type of headache is detected, the chiropractor and the practice member are one step closer to health and healing.





## Cervicogenic Headaches

Each head type of headache has slightly different symptoms, causes, and effects, allowing for over 150 different categories of headaches to be scientifically established. The most common type of headache is called the cervicogenic headache, and its root cause is poor posture or stress. Because we now know the source of this headache, we have found that chiropractic care with gentle corrections, massage therapy, diet change, and postural improvement are extremely effective ways to counter cervicogenic headaches.



## Tension Headaches

Although going through 150 different headaches is a much too extensive project for this e-book, we would like to discuss some of the most prevalent. Besides cervicogenic headaches, another ubiquitous headache is the tension headache. This is also known as the chronic daily headache because it is nearly impossible to shake. It is caused by muscle contractions that lead to mild or moderate pain. This pain is not usually constant but comes and goes as it wills. The tension headache feels like a tight band that constantly constricts the forehead tighter and tighter. Although its cause is largely unknown, several identified triggers are alcohol, stress, smoking, caffeine, etc.





## Migraines

The next culprit is the infamous migraine. Anyone who has experienced a serious migraine knows that going about daily life like normal is next to impossible. During a migraine, inflamed blood vessels and arteries literally squeeze your brain until it sends intense pain signals, calling for relief. The pain levels of migraines usually range from mild to severe. Several other symptoms of this type of headache are nausea, increased blood pressure, and sensitivity to bright light or noise.



## Cluster Headaches

Cluster headaches are some of the least common but most severe types of headaches. During a “cluster” period, these headaches can happen one to three times a day. A cluster period might last from two weeks to as long as three months! Cluster headaches are tricky to understand because they often go into remission for months or even years on end. During a cluster headache, the pain crowds around one side of the head but can move to the other side without warning. That said, it is never painful on both sides of the head at the same time. Several symptoms of cluster headaches are excruciating pain, restlessness, sweating, nasal discharge, and red, teary eyes.





## Organic Headaches

Although organic headaches sound natural, they are some of the most dangerous, often indicating a tumor on the brain, infection, high blood pressure, diseases of the brain, eyes, ears, and nose, blood clots, or aneurysms. Organic headaches are pretty rare, sitting at only 5% of headaches overall, but they must be cared for immediately.

Several indicators of organic headaches are:

1. Sudden, sharp, or severe pain
2. Immediate lack of balance or falling
3. Confusion
4. Seizures or difficulty speaking

If you ever experience any of these symptoms, seek care as soon as possible. Organic headaches can be life-threatening and should never be taken lightly.



## Benefits of Chiropractic Care

Most headaches are neither life-threatening nor dangerous, but they do decrease the overall quality of your life. Continued chiropractic care is a safe, drug-free, and effective way to care for headaches. The science is not too complicated. Think about your pain signals.

They are warnings to your brain that something is not quite right. The brain sends and receives many differing types of signals every second. Constantly, your brain is alerting various parts of your body to do their job. Often, an organ, muscle, or tissue in your body cannot function correctly, so it alerts the brain, often with a pain signal.

Your nervous system runs like a highly developed public transportation system (do not look to Italy as an example). Along your nerves, messages continually run to and from the brain. Unfortunately, like car accidents, there are mishaps in life that can cause delay or damage to the body. Subluxations along the spine can inhibit communication within the nervous system between the brain and the body. A misalignment decreases or blocks a nerve or several nerves so that the brain is unable to converse with a certain part of the body. When this happens, that part of their body cannot function as it should. Although the compressed nerve can be painful in and of itself, the other symptoms that result from the interrupted communication can be much worse.

For example, subluxations and misalignments cause nerve interference to the brain and muscles which can often actuate or intensify a headache. When this interference is removed through a chiropractic adjustment that corrects the misaligned vertebra, then your body can send and receive all of the information that it needs to function optimally. Since it can understand exactly what the brain needs it to do, that part of your body is enabled to heal and perform as it should. Regular chiropractic adjustments will work to eliminate nerve interference due to the daily bumps and bruises of life. When your nervous system is working at its fullest capacity, your body is incredibly healthy.





## Additional Ways to Care for Headaches

Along with chiropractic adjustments, working on proper posture, eliminating stress, drinking water, sleeping well, and not spending copious amounts of time hunching over your laptop or cellphone will help eliminate headaches. Poor posture is extremely common in America because the average American spends eleven hours sitting every day.

How mind-blowing is that? When muscles remain in the same position for extended periods, they become either overused or unused. Often, poor posture causes misalignments along the spine that become more severe over time. When the head is tilted too far forward over the shoulders, the result is immense pressure on your spine and muscle tension. This posture is so common in the workplace that, unsurprisingly, 95% of headaches are due to problems in the neck.

It is also not surprising that your head hurts when you are dehydrated because your brain begins to pull away from the skull as it shrinks from fluid loss. Sounds painful, right? Although the solution is remarkably simple - drinking water - chiropractic care can help ease your dehydration symptoms. For example, your muscles tense up when they are dehydrated and are not easily loosened. Chiropractic care helps to ease up your muscles gently so that they can naturally relax. At the same time, relaxation of the muscles allows the built-up waste in your muscles to slowly move away so that no further headaches are caused by it. There are many things that chiropractic can help with, but it takes participation by the individual as well - such as exercising and drinking water - for it to be fully effective.



## The Whole-Body Solution

When it comes to the body, there is seldom just one cause or one solution. Instead, there is a complex array of both. That said, chiropractic care is a major solution to headaches. Along with the everyday needs of the body such as water and food, your body requires continual care for its nervous system. Just like potholes need to be filled in for roads and tracks greased for trains,

the subluxations and nerve interferences within your nervous system should be frequently corrected. When they are corrected, the whole body is positively affected. The claim that the nervous system lies at the heart of most issues is not so wild if you understand that the brain needs the nervous system to instruct every part of the body to work in harmony. If the brain cannot communicate with the rest of the body, then the body is like a car without an engine. In this way, the main focus of chiropractic care is on the optimal health of every part of this miraculous organism. Inevitably, this whole-body care seeks to rid your body of any issues, including headaches!

If you are dealing with headaches and live in the Cape Coral area, please reach out to our office and set up a visit.

We would love to walk you through the many options that we offer for counteracting headaches. Our practice members frequently rave about the incredible results in our office, and we would love for you to experience the care that they do!



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Omar Clark received his B.S. in health promotions at Liberty University while also thriving as a collegiate athlete. After college, he pursued a Master's in Health and Wellness and became a Doctor of Chiropractic shortly after.

Dr. Omar is clearly passionate about educating others on the truth behind health and healing, and his optimistic and holistic view of life inspires many within his community and beyond. Together with his wife and three children, Dr. Omar continues to spread education and health through his practice, Experience Health and Wellness Center, in Cape Coral, Florida.

