



Headaches- Tension Type

By: Gary E. Foresman, MD

The Tension-Type Headache (TTH) is one that nearly everyone has experienced: the band-like, squeezing, throbbing, dull headache that usually messes with your day (but doesn't end it) and causes most of us to reach for our favorite pain-reliever (ibuprofen-Advil, naproxen-Aleve, acetaminophen-Tylenol, etc). If you have less than one TTH per month then that's exactly what I would do, assuming that approach effectively treats the problem.

If, however, you experience more frequent TTHs then this symptom calls for a more intensive approach. Your body is warning you of an imbalance through these "nagging" symptoms and simply relieving the pain won't solve the imbalance. Always start by reviewing the Foundations of Health, as the primary solution for all symptoms lies within the pillars of a good health regimen--stress reduction (self-realization), exercise and nutrition. For more specific techniques read on:

Hydration

One of the most common causes of TTH is simple dehydration. Cut out all sodas which are so acidic and actually dehydrate you, increasing your need for water. Strive for consuming half your body weight (in pounds) in ounces of water. Example: If you weigh 150 pounds, then drink 75 oz of water-- a little over nine 8 oz glasses of water.

Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep might be the best TTH preventer I know. Evaluate your mattress and pillow(s). Most of us need at least 8 hours of sleep. Consider trying natural sleep aides such as herbal combinations with Valerian and minerals like Myocalm PM and NutraSleep. These sleep aides can decrease muscle tension, whereas most OTC sleep aides like diphenhydramine (Benadryl) are dehydrating. For more information please read "Sleep Healthy, Live Healthy".

Detoxification

TTHs often signal accumulative "toxicity" in the human body. Symptoms of general malaise, achiness, fatigue, poor sleep quality all signal that it might be time to cleanse. If you like objective measures of toxicity come in for a BIA and this might help your understanding of the effects of chronic stress, lack of exercise, etc.

For more information please read "Detox Do's and Don'ts".

Stretching/Yoga

A regular routine of whole body stretching focusing on the head, neck, and shoulders becomes a necessary part of all of our lives as we age. Everyone I examine, almost without exception, carries excess tension that often leads to headaches. Developing a healthy stretching routine is imperative. Check out our friends at Central Coast Yoga for help.

Chiropractic Care

Work, poor posture, poor ergonomics at our computer, injury, and a host of other reasons can cause misalignments to occur. Amazingly I still find people in chronic pain that don't access these dedicated health-care practitioners. Our own Bob Maybee, DC is an outstanding chiropractic professional.

Diet/Nutrition

In TTH just as stress is almost always related, so is diet. Often just eliminating sugars or trying dietary eliminations of glutens or dairy can have life-altering effects. For anyone with TTH and digestive issues like constipation (fewer than two well-formed BMs per day), "heartburn", bloating and gas, diarrhea then a nutritional consultation is in order. Our own Carly Neubert, NC can help you.
Kaprex Inflamarest

Nutritional Supplements

For the acute treatment of TTH consider natural anti-inflammatories such as Kaprex and Inflama-Rest. My experience with supplements, however, is that they are better used consistently for a minimum of two weeks to obtain their maximum benefit. (Inflama-Rest Bonus Bottles now on sale in the Supplement Shop: 30 tablets +30 tablets free for \$15.99).

TTHs can have a profound effect upon our lives. Since we know "it won't kill me" then I have found that most people under-treat them. Many others have also found benefit by exploring Acupuncture and Massage Therapy (call us if you need a referral). I hope the tips above motivate you to search for the "cure to what ails you".

Your Journey to Health and Healing,
Gary E Foresman MD

References:
Upon Request

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