

# Condition of the month: HEADACHES

"After low back pain and sciatica, Headaches are the next most common condition we see in our clinic." writes Jon Toward. "There are so many different types of headache they tend to get pigeonholed into one of a couple of categories. The two most common types of headache are **Tension Headache** and **Migraines**."

**Tension Headache** usually presents with pain at the base of the head and the forehead, accompanied by a dull ache either around the sides of the head (in a tight band) or over the top of the head. Frequently there is a sharp pain behind the eyes too. Jon says "It is usually caused by overtight muscles at the base of the skull and upper neck. Like all muscles, once they become tight and start to overwork they can refer pain – as we described above. It tends to be a postural problem in probably 85-90% of cases. **Good posture** is really important! People often present with slouching, rounded shoulders and their head tends to be too far forward in relation to their neck. "This type of posture is due to an imbalance in the chest and neck muscles (being too tight) at the front and the upper back muscles (not strong enough to resist). It can be easily rectified by correcting any neck and upper back problems using Chiropractic treatment then doing some simple exercises to stretch overtight muscles and strengthen the weaker muscles. In this way we bring people into a more upright (military type) position. It is also important for people to assess their workstation and this is where we can give advice too."

**Migraines** are different in many respects. These headaches tend to be more vascular in nature (i.e. blood vessels seem to be more involved than muscles). There are two types of migraine – **Classic** and **Common**. Classic Migraine tends to present with an **aura** (commonly flashing lights and zig zags, a sensitivity to smells and light and frequent nausea and vomiting), Common migraine does not. Migraines tend to be one sided which does (though not always) differentiate them from other headaches. They tend to be triggered by sensitivities to food – i.e coffee, chocolate, red wine, strong cheeses etc. Whilst Migraines can be very debilitating they still respond very well to Chiropractic.

"There is often a **stress** component to all headaches and it's important to identify what it is." says Jon, "Where possible, we look at lifestyle issues to see if there is any area where people could possibly improve. It could be something as simple as having too many pillows – or not enough."

If you have any of the symptoms mentioned above or if you know someone who does, feel free to call our clinic and speak to one of our Chiropractors for information and advice. We also provide **free screens** if you would prefer to have a talk about your problem in private.

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