

Health Notes

Tension Headaches

by Dr. Mark Craft,
Craft Chiropractic Associates, PC

Tension, or cervicogenic, headaches are the most common type of headaches and affect approximately 20% of the population. The term cervicogenic implies that the headache has its origin in the cervical spine (neck).

This type of headache is characterized by localized pain in the neck and base of the skull. The pain may radiate to the forehead, eyes, temples, ears, or top of the head, and is aggravated or brought on by specific neck movements or sustained neck posture. The neck muscles are abnormally tender. Moving or stretching the neck changes the tone of the neck muscles. Sufferers of tension / cervicogenic headaches exhibit limitation or self-restriction of neck movements. X-rays may reveal arthritic changes. This type of headache is often worse by mid-day and may last for days, months or years. Tender muscular trigger points are often located at the base of the skull. The pain associated with tension/cervicogenic headaches is usually described as bilateral, heavy, pressing, and tight.

Between 70-90% of whiplash patients develop this type of headaches. Tension/cervicogenic headaches most often arise from muscles of the neck or misaligned joints of the neck. Stress related headaches develop from muscular imbalances associated with this type of headache.

Screening patients regarding their headache history is the most productive and time-efficient approach of investigation. A doctor will ask if your present headache is similar or different to those previously suffered. Be prepared to tell where the pain is, how constant it is, what makes it better or worse, what time of the day it develops, and if it's sharp, dull, burning or throbbing. Tell your doctor if your vision or taste is affected. Have you had previous episodes and what did or didn't help? Has there been any trauma? Do you have a fever or history of abnormal blood pressure? Is there any history of tobacco, alcohol, or drug (prescriptive or illegal) use? With this line of questioning, along with key exam procedures, expensive diagnostic tests are rarely needed.

Treatments of tension headaches generally respond to chiropractic manipulation of the cervical spine. This mode of treatment was supported by a Duke University Medical School study that took place several years ago. The study found almost immediate improvement for cervicogenic headaches with few side effects when spinal manipulation was utilized. Restoring normal muscle tone is an important part of treatment for this type of headache and can be achieved by a variety of methods.

Over-the-counter analgesics are commonly used with varying results, but some studies show just less than one-third of users overuse these analgesics. Some people utilize prescription medications for tension headaches, and these are often an option for treatment.

When treating this type of headache, correcting any postural imbalances – especially in the neck – is of great benefit. Ergonomic instruction for both the home and workplace is extremely effective. For anyone to achieve maximum benefit for any chosen treatment, the sufferer must participate in self-stretching and exercise techniques. Modifying a person's activities of daily living, such as sleep and diet, is also important. Supplementation of specific vitamins and herbs in many instances can help relieve this type of headache.

If you suffer from tension headaches, do something about them. Monitor your progress with open dialogue with whichever doctor you choose and follow their advice. You can feel better!





James Coleman
(845) 647-5427
(845) 647-5567 (fax)

JC CONSTRUCTION, LLC

General Contractor

Commercial • Residential • Industrial
Carpentry • Masonry • Painting • Roofing
Fully Insured



martinrabkinink
Integrated Marketing/Communications/PR

Martin Rabkin
CEO

7 Camp Street
Ellenville, NY 12428
Tel: 845.647.8031
Fax: 801.684.4205
Cell: 914.420.5739
mrabkin@martinrabkinink.com
www.martinrabkinink.com

845-647-8585 HOME 647-5414



Ellenville Florist

INCORPORATED

COMPLETE FLORAL ARRANGEMENT & DESIGN
PLANT BOUTIQUE & GIFTS

EVERETT JORAY GREGG JORAY 95 CANAL STREET ELLENVILLE, NY 12428



Buying or Selling
...See Us First

LUCILLE HAND

LICENSED REAL ESTATE BROKER

LucilleHand@realtor.com
Lhandrealest@catskill.net

28 N. Main St. (Rte. 209)
Ellenville, N.Y. 12428
Tel. 845-647-8020
FAX 845-647-5293

Rt. 32, P.O. Box 113
Mountainville, N.Y. 10953
Tel/Fax 845-534-5549



Curves

"30 MINUTE FITNESS & WEIGHT LOSS CENTERS"

Kathleen Strong
Owner

170 Canal Street
Ellenville, NY 12428
845-647-0035
Fax: 845-647-0035

Wurtsboro Plaza (Rt. 209)
Wurtsboro, NY 12790
845-888-2343
Fax: 845-888-2350