

Headaches

Headaches are a very common form of pain ranging from mild to severe. Almost 90% of men and 95% of woman report having a headache at least once a year.

A headache can be defined as pain in the head that is located from the eyes or ears up into the top of the head, at the back of the head or into the upper neck. Headaches can either be caused by anything that stimulates the pain receptors (Nerves) in the head and neck. Common types of headaches include tension headaches, cluster headaches, migraines or cervicogenic headaches (Neck related headache.)

What can cause a headache

To achieve movement out skeleton and muscles need to work together harmoniously as a team. This includes the joint, discs, muscles and ligaments, all of these structures have nerve endings which are sensitive to neck injury or strain. If the nerve endings become irritated or inflamed they cannot only cause pain in the neck region but can also refer pain into the face and scalp causing a neck related headache. The pain caused by neck related headaches often starts at the base of the skull and radiates into the forehead, temples, eyes, scalp and face. Thus, treatment of the neck can give rapid and lasting relief to sufferers of neck related headaches.

Migraine and Tension Headache sufferers also can respond well to physiotherapy neck treatment. For example, in a stressful situation the muscle of the upper back, shoulders and the neck can become very tense which can lead to a tension headaches which should respond well to treatment of the neck area.

Common Neck conditions that can contribute to neck related headaches.

1. Poor Posture: Good Posture reduces the forces through structures in the neck such as the joint, muscles and discs. Poor posture will place strain on these structures and could result in pain. Common postural mistakes include:
 - Slouching whilst sitting
 - Holding the neck in one position for too long especially if this position in one of a poor posture.
 - Sleeping on your stomach with the head turned to face one side.
 - Sleeping with an unsupportive pillow
 - Poor ergonomic position at work/computer
 - Poor car set up
 - Poor exercise position e.g. running technique or weights technique
2. Injury to the neck or Nerve irritation: Sporting accidents and everyday incidents can cause trauma or irritation to the structures of the neck, resulting in neck related headaches.



3. Whiplash: A more severe type of neck injury. Whiplash occurs when the head is snapped backwards and forwards in a violent manner, straining or tearing the muscles and ligaments of the neck. In the very severe cases, the vertebrae of the neck can be dislocated or fractured.
4. Jaw Clenching: Prolonged or intense jaw clenching can lead to headaches. For some people this intense jaw clenching will occur for prolonged periods whilst they are sleeping and they waken with the headache. Along with dentistry input this can respond well to physiotherapy treatment.
5. Wear and Tear: commonly known as Arthritis. The ageing process can lead to a progressive degeneration of the neck vertebrae. Headaches, felt as pain in the neck may be caused by arthritis particularly in the event that the first, second or third vertebrae are involved.

Common Neck related headache symptoms

Nausea and vomiting
Dizziness
Tinnitus
Double Vision or Visual disturbance
Food aversion
Teeth ache and jaw pain
Numbness or tingling
Eye pain



Treating Neck related headaches

Headaches that are caused by problems of the musculoskeletal system tend to ease once the underlying disorder is identified and addressed. The key components of treating neck related headaches are identifying underlying postural issues or activities that exacerbate the symptoms. Treatment can be in the form of Manual mobilisation of structures that have stiffened and require mobilisation, muscle massage/mobilisation to allow underlying muscle issues to resolve, taping techniques to help assist the re-education of the muscle system, education and advice on posture and activities including ergonomic assessment and progressive stretching and strengthening exercises to assist in maintaining good posture and position.

As a specialist Musculoskeletal physiotherapy practise. Pure Physio adopts a problem solving approach to headaches pain and treatment. If you would like to discuss your condition or have an enquiry, please visit our website www.purephysioclinic.com or call 0774744440