

Headaches Getting in the way of your Life?

By Fran Stockley-Nutritional Therapist & Coach

Does your head literally ache, pound or thump on a regular basis? Does it stop you from concentrating, relaxing, socialising and enjoying your life? Have you tried everything to get rid of them? You are not alone! It is estimated that 9 million of us in the UK experience headaches as a common feature of our lives. However-there is probably something missing in your diet that could alleviate your frequent headaches.



What is a head ache?

When you experience pain or discomfort of any kind it is your body's way of saying 'Hello...I am not happy please pay attention!' When our veins and arteries in our brain and our membranes that cover our brain become stretched, irritated, inflamed or compressed we start to feel discomfort.

Most of us see a headache as a normal part of every day life and accept that we need to take a paracetamol, but imagine if you could control the pain in your head with one or two alterations to your diet?

You may experience **Cervical headaches** coming from muscle spasm in the neck, **Tension headaches** coming from inflamed tissues in the neck, **Vascular headaches** caused by fevers, drugs, nerve irritation, hormone imbalance, **Migraines** preceded by a "warning signal" such as nausea, speech disturbance/dizziness, **Cluster** headaches where you experience several in one day, **Organic headaches** include sinus, hangover, allergy, caffeine withdrawal, pregnancy, hypertension, reading, and low blood sugar headaches.

What CAUSES our head to ache?

Trigger Foods that can cause our arteries and veins to become inflamed and irritated causing a headache include:

Tyramine foods: mature cheeses, processed meats, pickles, red wine.

Nitrates & Food Colourings: Almost all processed foods and microwave meals

MSG (Mono-Sodium-Glutamate): Included in some Chinese Restaurant foods and Soy Sauce.

Caffeine: Tea, coffee, chocolate.

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DEHYDRATION is the most common reason for headaches. We simply forget to drink. It is actually very difficult to have a headache when we are sipping water throughout the day and avoiding lots of caffeine and processed foods. A headache is one of the first signs of dehydration in the body.

Recommendations from Fran

- **Water**-Some of us do some of don't...all of us should. We are made of 80% water so it is important to keep drinking throughout the day in order to maintain our body's normal function. Water is the only truly hydrating drink most others will dehydrate the body
- **Blood Sugar**-Eat little and often throughout the day and include protein. For example if you eat your breakfast at 7am and wait till 1.30pm to eat again your blood sugar will be so low (and this is one of the major causes of migraines). Introduce nuts and dried fruit as a snack in the morning. Or Hummus and carrot/cucumber to sustain you until lunch.
- **Posture**-It has been shown that if we block the blood flow through our body through wrong posture we are at risk of a headache. Make sure your desk is set up with your computer at eye level and that you take regular breaks.
- **Focus**-Just thinking about something can give us a headache! Of course none of us need any more stress in our lives...if we are very stressed it is likely our life is one big headache. For every thing that is not going the way we want in our lives there will some thing we can find to be appreciative and grateful for. Focus on these more often, they naturally relax our internal biochemistry and give our body (and head) a break!

Fran works one to one at Emma James Physio in Boxmoor on Saturdays. She also runs courses and talks on how to improve you health.

To book your FREE 15 minute consultation to see how Fran can help you relieve your symptoms please ask at reception or call 07838137381.