

## Acupuncture Treat Headache/ Migraine

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Headache is the most common symptom, however the cause is complex. 90% percent of people have experienced some episode of headache in lives. Headache is a symptom, not a disease. I will discuss tension Headache, migraine headache, cervical headache and myogenic headache in this article because they are commonly seen in clinics.

A migraine headache can cause intense throbbing or a pulsing sensation in one area of the head and is commonly accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and extreme sensitivity to light and sound. Female experiences more than male. When it occurs in adolescence, it often has cyclical episodes. More often, it is related to menstrual cycle. You usually begin symptoms such as sleepiness, fatigue, depressed, flash appeared in front of eye, numbness in the limbs and aphasia. Severe headache will appear after these symptoms disappear after 20-30 minutes. The headache starts with orbital or forehead unilaterally, then spread lateral and until to the whole head. The duration of headache can last up to few hours to few days. Sleep usually can relief some degree of headache. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, head is considered the most upper part of the body. Head is the place where all the yang meridians of hand and foot meet, qi and blood of the viscerca & organs all flow upward to the head. We can understand this as our head need energy & blood from our body. When pathogen obstructs such pathways and nourishment, it disorders regular circulation of energy and blood; therefore cause headache. When treating with acupuncture, acupuncture can regulate vascular sympathetic, release spasm of blood vessels, increase blood flow, and release neuralgia caused by ischemia due to over sensitive nerve blocking. Moreover, acupuncture unblocks and harmonizes meridians and channels involved.

A tension headache (tension-type headache) is caused by soft tissue spasm clinically manifest as a diffuse, mild to moderate pain in head that's often described as feeling like a tight band around your head. It is most caused by irregularity in life style, over drinking or smoking, insomnia or not enough sleep. When it occurs during menopause, it is usually induced by endocrine system, depression, anxiety, stress, fatigue, insomnia and etc. When treat using acupuncture, it reduces the spasm in the soft tissues and balance your body.

Cervicogenic headache is one type of headache that is non-genetic or inheritance. Besides headache, the syndrome characterized by neck pain, stiffness in neck area, pain upon palpation at the local area; induced pain when in certain positions. Pain can locate anywhere from neck, nape, orbital, and in the area of shoulder and upper arm. Patient often feel discomfort in the area of posterior of ear, inferior of ear, oppression, soreness, and pain. The pain sometimes spread to forehead, temporal, occipital, neck area. Some patients experience tinnitus, distension in eye area, stiffness at the neck area, and ear swelling. Cold, over-exhausting, drinking, emotion can aggregate such pain. This type of headache often had history of trauma, degeneration discs, compressed nerve caused by degeneration, budged disc/herniated disc and others. The reason of the headache is caused by cervical spondylosis which induces local muscle spasm. The spasm irregularities normal circulation of blood flow, accumulate pathogenic substances such as lactic acid, 5-serotonin, and etc. When diagnosis patient with this type of

headache, acupuncturists review CT/ MRI/ X- ray and clinical manifestations to determinate abnormal changes in physiological curvature, disc or soft tissue dysfunction, cervical facet joint instability, neck muscle strain and others. Human's spine is stabilized and maintained by disc, tendon, muscle, cervical joints. Any over-use, injury, long duration of same head position can cause changes in cervical disc and facet joints, strain in soft tissue; therefore aggression to decrease curvature in physiological spine. The step aggression in this condition is induced loose joint capsule & ligament and neck facet joint instability. These changes stimulate neck nerves, muscles, blood circulation and cause a series of symptoms such as headache, neck pain and shoulder pain. The most common one is caused by neck degeneration at C2-C3 level. The important symptoms include restricted range of motion, stiffness and pain at local area and occipital area pain.

Myogenic headache is very common in clinic. It is a result from chronic tissue ischemia and myofascitis induced by local soft tissue spasm and abnormal accumulation from muscle tissue metabolism. Long duration of computer or desk work is the most common cause in resulting reduction in muscular blood flow, induce muscle spasm and induce damages in tendon/ligament and myofascial. The treatment principle in acupuncture is to release spasm, invigorate blood and unblock local channels to resolve headache.

Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture treat headache/ migrant as a symptom. Each practitioner will review and determinate the cause of the headache and set up a treatment principle. From this article, you can find that causes of headache are many. The treatment should also be set up base on individual case. This is the fundamental theory in Traditional Chinese Medicine: same disease different treatment, different treatment same disease.