

## **What Is Migraine?**

**A migraine is a severe, painful headache that is often preceded or accompanied by sensory warning signs such as flashes of light, blind spots, tingling in the arms and legs, nausea, vomiting, and increased sensitivity to light and sound. The excruciating pain that migraines bring can last for hours or even days.**

What are the symptoms of migraine?

Symptoms of migraine can occur a while before the headache, immediately before the headache, during the headache, and after the headache. Although not all migraines are the same, typical symptoms include:

- Moderate to severe pain, usually confined to one side of the head, but switching in successive migraines
- Pulsing and throbbing head pain
- Increasing pain during physical activity
- Inability to perform regular activities due to pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Increased sensitivity to light and sound

Many people experience migraines with auras just before or during the head pain, but most do not. Auras are perceptual disturbances such as confusing thoughts or experiences and the perception of strange lights, sparkling or flashing lights, lines in the visual field, blind spots, pins and needles in an arm or leg, or unpleasant smells.

Migraine sufferers also may have premonitions called prodrome that can occur several hours or a day or so before the headache. These premonitions may consist of feelings of elation or intense energy, cravings for sweets, thirst, drowsiness, irritability, or depression

## **How is migraine caused?**

Migraine headaches result from a combination of blood vessel enlargement and the release of chemicals from nerve fibers that coil around these blood vessels. During the headache, an artery enlarges that is located on the outside of the skull just under the skin of the temple (temporal artery). This causes a release of chemicals that cause inflammation, pain, and further enlargement of the artery.

A migraine headache causes the sympathetic nervous system to respond with feelings of nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. This response also delays the emptying of the stomach into the small intestine (affecting food absorption), decreases blood circulation (leading to cold hands and feet), and increases sensitivity to light and

sound.

## **What triggers migraine?**

Some people who suffer from migraines can clearly identify triggers or factors that cause the headaches, but many cannot. Potential migraine triggers include:

- Allergies and allergic reactions
- Neck misalignment
- Bright lights, loud noises, and certain odors or perfumes
- Physical or emotional stress
- Changes in sleep patterns or irregular sleep
- Smoking or exposure to smoke
- Skipping meals or fasting
- Alcohol
- Menstrual cycle fluctuations, birth control pills, hormone fluctuations during menopause onset
- Tension headaches
- Foods containing tyramine (red wine, aged cheese, smoked fish, chicken livers, figs, and some beans), monosodium glutamate (MSG), or nitrates (like bacon, hot dogs, and salami)
- Other foods such as chocolate, nuts, peanut butter, avocado, banana, citrus, onions, dairy products, and fermented or pickled foods.

Triggers do not always cause migraines, and avoiding triggers does not always prevent migraines.

### **Migraine can occasionally be caused by something more serious.**

- Bleeding within the skull
- Blood clot within the membrane that covers the brain
- Stroke
- Dilated blood vessel in the brain
- Too much or too little cerebrospinal fluid
- Inflammation of the membranes of the brain or spinal cord
- Nasal sinus blockage
- Postictal headache (after stroke or seizure)
- Tumors

It is always best to consult your doctor to check these out first. Once eliminated from the possible causes, seek help from a qualified alternative practitioner.

## **How is migraine successfully treated and prevented?**

**Western Medicine does not treat migraine...it treats the symptoms of migraine...and often not successfully. No migraine was ever caused by lack of a pharmaceutical agent!!**

**To cure migraine headache it is first important to find your root cause. This may range from neck and spinal misalignment, and stress, to food sensitivity.**

**In this practice, as a Chartered Physiotherapist and Licensed Acupuncturist, I would firstly check your neck, spinal alignment and posture, and make any corrections and suggestions necessary. I would then treat with acupuncture to rebalance the system, elevate pain and relieve any muscle tension. There is often significant relief in the first session.**

**If stress and/or anxiety is your problem, I will offer you either Hypnotherapy or EFT to help quickly alleviate the cause of your stress, or NLP coaching to help you eliminate negative limiting beliefs which are stressing you.**

**If the spine and neck are not found to be the root cause, I carry out a Clinical Kinesiology Diagnostic test to ascertain what toxicity in your system, which is leading to food sensitivities, and inflammation. You will then be prescribed specific supplements to assist your detoxification, and cure your food sensitivity for good**

## **A note about Acupuncture for Migraines and Headaches**

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese technique that involves the insertion of very fine, solid needles into certain points of the body. According to traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture helps headaches by stimulating the body's ability to resist or overcome illnesses and conditions by correcting energy imbalances. The term "chi" (pronounced "chee") is used to describe the energy that circulates through meridians in the body. The belief is that migraine and headache pain develops when the natural flow of chi is disrupted, leading to an imbalance of energy, and that acupuncture can correct this energy disruption to restore physical, mental, and emotional health.

According to studies, acupuncture may cause the release of pain-reducing opioid chemicals, such as endorphins. In addition, acupuncture may stimulate the brain to release other types of body chemicals and hormones that transmit signals between different types of cells, including those of the immune system.

Acupuncture appears to be beneficial in treating a variety of health problems in addition to headaches. The World Health Organization currently recognizes more than 30 diseases or conditions, ranging from allergies to tennis elbow, that can be helped by acupuncture treatment. The Consensus Statement on Acupuncture by the National Institutes of Health, released in 1997, stated that for conditions including headache, low back pain, menstrual cramps, and carpal tunnel syndrome, acupuncture was useful as an additional treatment or an acceptable alternative to be included in a comprehensive pain management program.

What makes acupuncture a unique anti-pain approach is the suggestion that its effects may be long-lasting. In one recent study, acupuncture treatment reduced chronic pain in the neck and shoulder areas and associated headache, with the effects lasting for months.

For further information or help with your migraine, please call me on +442866228200, or email me on [info@lindaburke.co.uk](mailto:info@lindaburke.co.uk)