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**Qi Mail™****The Acupuncture Newsletter****December 2012****Dr. Glenn H. Osterweil, D.P.M., LAc.**

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Reduce Migraine and Headache Pain with Acupuncture

Are you plagued by chronic headaches? More than 45 million Americans (one in six) suffer from chronic headaches, 20 million of whom are women. Scientific research shows that acupuncture can be more effective than medication in reducing the severity and frequency of chronic headaches.

The pain that headache and migraine sufferers endure can impact every aspect of their lives. A widely accepted form of treatment for headaches, acupuncture can offer powerful relief without the side effects that prescription and over-the-counter drugs can cause. Headaches and migraines, as well as their underlying causes have been treated successfully with acupuncture and Oriental medicine for thousands of years. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be used alone in the management and treatment of headaches, or as part of a comprehensive treatment program.

Traditional Chinese Medicine does not recognize migraines and chronic headaches as one particular syndrome. Instead, it aims to treat the specific symptoms that are unique to each individual using a variety of techniques such as acupuncture, tui-na massage, and energetic exercises to restore imbalances found in the body. Therefore, your diagnosis and treatment will depend on a number of variables including:

- Is the headache behind your eyes and temples, or is it located more on the top of your head?
- When do your headaches occur (i.e. night, morning, after eating)?
- Do you find that a cold compress or a darkened room can alleviate some of the pain?
- Is the pain dull and throbbing, or sharp and piercing?

Your answers to these questions will help your practitioner create a treatment plan specifically for you. The basic foundation for Oriental medicine is that there is a life energy flowing through the body which is termed Qi (pronounced chee). This energy flows through the body on channels known as meridians that connect all of our major organs. According to Oriental medical theory, illness or pain arises when the cyclical flow of Qi in the meridians becomes unbalanced. Acupuncture stimulates specific points located on or near the surface of the skin to alter various biochemical and physiological conditions that cause aches and pains or illness.

The length, number and frequency of treatments will vary. Typical treatments last from five to 30 minutes, with

the patient being treated one or two times a week. Some headaches, migraines and related symptoms are relieved after the first treatment, while more severe or chronic ailments often require multiple treatments.

Do you or someone you know suffer from headaches or migraines? Call today to find out how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you!

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7 Healthy Habits of Headache Sufferers

Headache sufferers can reduce the intensity and frequency of their headaches or migraine episodes by following a few simple steps:

Nutrition - Eat regular meals, avoid foods and drinks that are known to trigger headache attacks.

Sleep - Practice good sleep habits. Maintain a regular sleeping schedule, including weekends and vacations.

Stress - Implement stress reduction techniques into your daily life.

Education - Stay apprised of the latest treatment options and headache relief news.

Headaches Dramatically Reduced by Acupuncture

Since the early seventies, studies around the globe have suggested that acupuncture is an effective treatment for migraines and headaches.

Researchers at Duke University Medical Center analyzed the results of more than 30 studies on acupuncture as a pain reliever for a variety of ailments, including chronic headaches. They found that acupuncture decreases pain with fewer side effects and can be less expensive than medication. Researchers found that using acupuncture as an alternative for pain relief also reduced the need for post-operative pain medications.

In a study published in the November 1999 issue of Cephalalgia, scientists evaluated the effectiveness of acupuncture in the treatment of migraines and recurrent headaches by systematically reviewing 22 randomized controlled trials. A total of 1,042 patients were examined. It was found that headache and migraine sufferers experienced significantly more relief from acupuncture than patients who were administered "sham" acupuncture.

A clinical observation, published in a 2002 edition of the Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine, studied 50 patients presenting with various types of headaches who were treated with scalp acupuncture. The results of this study showed that 98 percent of patients treated with scalp acupuncture experienced no headaches or only occasional, mild headaches in the six months following care.

In a case study, published in the June 2003 Issue of Medical Acupuncture, doctors found that acupuncture resulted in the resolution or reduction in the frequency and severity of cluster headaches, and a decrease or discontinuation of pain medications. It was concluded that acupuncture can be used to provide sustained relief from cluster headaches and to stimulate the body's natural production of adrenal cortisol to aid in discontinuing corticosteroids.

According to the July 2005 issue of the British Medical Journal, a randomized controlled trial in Germany found that acupuncture cut tension headache rates almost in half. Researchers divided 270 patients who reported similarly severe tension headaches into three groups for the study. Over the project's eight-week period, one group received traditional acupuncture, one received only minimal acupuncture, and the third group received neither treatment. Those receiving the traditional acupuncture reported headache rates of nearly half that of those who received no treatments, suffering 7 fewer days of headaches. The minimal acupuncture group suffered 6.6 fewer days, and the non-acupuncture group suffered 1.5 fewer days. The improvements continued for months after the treatments were concluded, rising slightly as time went on.

Headache Diary - Keep a diary of when your headaches occur, along with any triggers, and share the information with your healthcare provider.

See Your Healthcare Provider - Make an appointment with your healthcare provider to specifically discuss your headaches.

Be a Partner in Your Headache Care - Stay informed, so you can be a participant in your treatment and an advocate for improving your own headache care.

Staying Healthy

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help prevent illness by building up the immune system with just a few needles inserted into key points along the body's energy pathways.

These points are known for strengthening the circulation of blood and energy and consolidating the outer defense layers of the skin and muscle (wei Qi) so that germs and viruses cannot enter through them.

Seasonal acupuncture treatments also serve to tonify inner organ systems and correct minor annoyances before they become serious problems.

Call to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you stay healthy

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