

Treating Headaches

All headaches have the same mechanism, whether they are migraine, tension, or sinus - inflammation of blood vessels. The only difference between these kinds of headaches is the location of the inflammation.

Headaches are caused by numerous triggers such as; weather, hormones, foods, stress, smells, smoke, exercise, sex and injury. It is not just one trigger that causes headaches. **It is the sum total of trigger load at any given time that causes the onset of headaches.**

All people carry trigger load, but not all people have headaches. People have various **headache thresholds**. The lower the threshold, the easier it is to get a headache. The higher the threshold the more headache resistant one is.

Three Steps to Headache Control

Step One: Get off all medications that cause rebound headaches (check with your doctor first!). The medications are most often various kinds of drugs that are used to treat headaches. This is step one because if you do not get off all rebound medications, the following steps are ineffective. (See chart: **Medications and Drugs that Cause Rebound Headaches.**)

Step Two: Reducing trigger load. Many triggers are unavoidable like weather, hormones, stress. . . This leaves one to deal with avoidable triggers. The easiest triggers to reduce are food related. (See handout) Dealing with food triggers lowers the total trigger load greatly. Much of the time, this step gives people enough headache control that they do not need to move onto step #3.

Step Three: Raise the headache threshold. This step is needed if steps #1 & #2 are not enough. There are certain medications that help raise one's headache resistance. These generally need to be prescribed by a doctor. This is also an area where acupuncture can really help. Acupuncture is a very powerful tool to raise a patient's threshold.