

## HEADACHES- IT'S NOT "ALL IN YOUR HEAD"

There are different types of headaches and the causes and contributing factors can vary greatly. One of the most common types of headache is the tension or muscle contraction headache. Typically muscle contraction headaches are described as bilateral, commonly in the back or sides of the head. Muscles of the face, neck and upper back become very sensitive. Sufferers of these headaches also complain of a tight band around the head. The pain is steady. The muscles of the neck, upper back and head are contracting for an extended period of time. They can also trigger a migraine headache. Muscle contraction headaches make up 70-80% of all headaches.

Any activity that causes the head to be held in one position for a long time without moving it can cause a headache. Activities such as typing, desk/computer work, fine work with hands or sleeping with neck in an abnormal position can also trigger it. Other causes include eye strain, excessive caffeine, over exertion or anxiety. Poor posture plays an important role in creating tension headaches. A head position which is anterior or in "forward" location causes increased stress as gravity will continue to pull it forward. There is then a subsequent opposite force produced by the posterior muscles of the upper back and neck to counter balance the weight of the head.

Taking pain medication or muscle relaxers can help short term, but taking these medications too often can also create a headache. These headaches are called rebound headaches or drug induced headaches. You have a headache, so you take pain medication. When the pain medication wears off, it causes another headache which can create a bad cycle. A person is at risk for rebound headaches if they take pain medicine 3 or more days a week. Examples of nonprescription medicines that can cause rebound headaches are Aspirin, Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen. Some prescribed medications can also cause these headaches. Talk to your health care provider if you are taking medicine for headaches more than 2 or 3 times per week.

Treatment for muscle contraction headaches at times needs to be comprehensive. Patients may need medication prescribed by their family doctors, but this should not be the sole treatment. Diet, stress reduction, manipulation and physical therapy all have added benefits in controlling and preventing headaches. Centerpointe Chiropractic and Physical Therapy will be holding a **Free** self help headache class Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>. The class will be instructed by a licensed Chiropractor and Physical Therapist. It will start at 6:00 pm and will last 30-45 minutes. We will focus on neck and upper back exercises, breathing and yoga exercises and ergonomic changes to your work area. If you or any friends would like to attend this complimentary class please contact Lou Rossi, D.C. or Matt Trnka, P.T. at 330-723-2225. Space is limited. We are located at 4085 N. Jefferson Street Medina, Oh. Behind Kohls.