



HEADACHES

There are many different types of headaches with literally hundreds of different causes or triggers. Different headaches need to be treated in different ways. Correct diagnosis of headaches requires a thorough history and examination of the patient by a qualified health professional.

Below are a few of the more common different types of headaches that people can suffer you will find separate information sheets on some of these headache types.

- Tension headaches – stress and tension
- Cervicogenic – due to structures in and around the neck and head
- Eye strain headache
- Migraine – vascular headache
- Sinus headache
- Headache due to viral infection (ie with a cold or flu)
- Other
 - Dehydration – common with “hang-over”
 - Side effect of medication/s

- Associated with allergic responses
- After trauma and concussions
- Serious infections and illness
- Associated with inflammation/irritation of nerves - neuralgia
- Associated with pressure in the brain clots / strokes, tumours etc
- and many more

Most of the time headaches are a very simple and only require conservative treatment such as manual therapy, rest, fluids and simple analgesics. You should always see a health professional to correctly diagnose the cause of your headache.

Osteopathic treatment can be very valuable in managing certain headaches. Your Osteopath will take a full history and examine you to determine what type of headache you have and if they can help you or need to refer you for further investigation and treatment.

There are times however when headaches can indicate something far more serious and dangerous that should be investigated. You should always see a health professional as soon as possible if any of the following apply.

- Dizziness
- Following Trauma
- Very rapid onset
- The complaint that 'this is the worst ever headache'
- Accompanying 'flu like' symptoms
- Accompanying severe cervical/ spinal pain and stiffness
- Associated skin rash
- Associated with faints, fits or loss of consciousness
- Progressively worsening (either increasing in pain intensity over time or increasing duration or frequency)
- Nausea or vomiting (particularly in children)
- Visual or hearing disturbances
- Gait disturbances (ie problems walking)
- Problems speaking
- Problems swallowing
- Pins and needles around head or upper limbs
- Pain into the arms
- Headache that has changed or that is not the typical H/A usually experienced by the patient
- The headache is not relieved by pain medication
- If you also have high blood pressure or other cardiovascular disease
- If you have loss of memory or inability to provide accurate history