

How to prevent and treat Migraines

By Alex Tuggle L.Ac.

Migraines can be caused by a variety of factors: overworking, stress, emotions, dehydration, improper diet or eating habits, hunger, constipation, lack of rest, excess alcohol, chocolate or caffeine consumption, and stiff neck and shoulders. Of course there are other causes for migraines but these are common culprits.

Try reducing your caffeine intake, stop drinking alcohol, avoid chocolate, relax or lay in bed for a while, drink more water, avoid processed, salty and greasy foods, always eat in a relaxed state of mind. Constipation can be corrected by jogging a little each week as often as is possible as well as making sure to drink enough water. I recommend drinking warm water since cold foods and drinks tend to slow down your metabolism by straining your thyroid gland, which is in charge of maintaining our body temperature and our digestive metabolic rates. Slowing our metabolism can lead to constipation and this intestinal blockage can lead to migraines.

Stress and emotions are common causes of migraines since they effect the nervous system and constrict the blood vessels and capillaries, which can induce pain in the peripheral nerves in our forehead, scalp and behind the eyes.

Traditional Chinese Medicine views migraines as too much energy rising to the head. This can be caused by too much activity, too much thinking, stressful lifestyle, not enough rest, and excess anger. The treatment is to get the energy to descend out of the head and into the feet.

Certain acupuncture points are very effective at treating migraines. The point Liver 3 (TaiChong) is located in between the first toe (big toe) and the second toe, in the depression about one inch proximal to the web. Press this point hard enough to elicit a deep ache that radiates towards the bottom of your foot. Massaging the soles of your feet and also all of the depressions on the top of your feet is always good at relieving migraines. You can also massage your ankles and legs, moving down towards your feet. You can also massage the tops of your shoulders since many migraines come from shoulder and neck tension.

Try to eat something light like a piece of toast since migraines can be due to low blood sugar. Lavender oil is also very useful at relieving migraines. Chamomile, lavender and mint tea can help soothe the nerves and calm stress. You can make a pillow with lavender flowers, chamomile, shells, fluorite or other minerals and put this over your eyes to soothe and calm your nerves. Turn out all of the lights, burn some sandalwood or aloeswood incense and listen to soothing music, massaging or focusing on the soles of your feet. Getting enough rest and learning to relax is really the key to controlling chronic migraines.