Headaches come in many shapes and sizes. Some people never get headaches while others endure chronic pain that does not allow them to function at work, sleep, eat or lead a normal life. According to the American Council for Headache Education, at least 90 percent of men and 95 percent of women have experienced at least one headache. Although painkillers such as aspirin, ibuprofen and ergotamine can give relief, they often cannot be taken long-term due to serious side effects on the body.

Whether it be migraine or non-migraine headaches, your naturopathic doctor will sit down with you and spend time looking into a variety of factors. Since no two patients have exactly the same causes, each person receives a specific, individualized plan. Muscle tension caused by poor posture, lack of body movement or bad sitting positions can be a factor. Mineral deficiencies may keep your neck and back muscles from relaxing. Dehydration will also contribute to tight muscles. Furthermore, a daily coffee habit may act to help your body lose water, deplete minerals and keep your blood vessels tighter than they should be. Sometimes, just looking at one or two of the above issues has been enough to bring relief and avoid medication for many patients.

For those who are already doing all the above and have not found relief, there are a few more natural paths to explore. Food allergies are known to trigger headaches in certain individuals. Food allergies combined with low immunity that cause chronic sinusitis will often contribute to head pain. Clearing the sinuses by staying away from offending foods, decreasing sugar intake, taking vitamin C and using home eucalyptus steam inhalation often clears the sinus congestion and relieves head pain.

Last, but not least, stress is an important cause of headaches. Stress tightens and constricts muscles and raises blood pressure. Stress can also raise the levels of immune cells that make you more sensitive to pain. Stress reduction techniques such as seeing a counselor, meditation, yoga, exercise and lavender/magnesium salt baths can help physically and mentally allow someone to let go of tension and headaches. Relaxing herbal formulas may include Rhodiola, Valerian, Kava and Passiflora. Acupuncture is an excellent adjunct to naturopathic treatments. Please note that it is highly recommended to see a qualified naturopathic doctor before beginning an herbal and supplemental regimen.

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