

# RELIEVE MIGRAINE PAIN NATURALLY SO YOU CAN LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST

A migraine is a type of throbbing headache that can also cause sensitivity to light, nausea and vomiting. Some people also experience auras or visual disturbances where they see flashes of light.

Migraines differ from headaches in that the pain is more intense and usually concentrated on one side of the head. A migraine can last for days and be physically debilitating, often interfering with one's ability to function.

Learn what causes migraines, **common triggers** which exacerbate symptoms and how acupuncture for migraines can be extremely effective. Relieve migraine pain naturally so you can live life to the fullest.

## WHAT CAUSES MIGRAINES?

There has been much research into migraines and the exact cause is yet to be defined. However, it is thought that hormonal changes and nerve signaling affect blood vessels in the brain and how the body responds to pain. When blood vessels in the brain dilate (become wider), more blood and oxygen flow to the brain which can release a compound called prostaglandins. Prostaglandins are responsible for regulating pain levels and inflammation in the body this compounded with depletion of serotonin. Migraines have been termed a **TRIGEMINALVASULAR** event related to TMD disorders

## COMMON MIGRAINE TRIGGERS

- **Stress** is a common trigger for migraines as it can alter the way the brain functions, including the output of hormones and chemical messengers. When you get stressed, your body produces more serotonin (the stress hormone) to enable the body to respond to stress accordingly. Serotonin constricts blood vessels; so, when serotonin levels change, migraines can occur.
- **Certain foods** like **cured meats** (deli meats, sausages, bacon, ham) **aged cheeses** (blue cheese, parmesan), **salty and pickled foods**, and **chocolate** can trigger the onset of a migraine as they contain substances such as nitrates, additives, preservatives and tyramine. Foods high in sodium (salt) can increase blood pressure and constrict blood vessels which may activate a migraine.
- **Lack of sleep or a change in sleeping patterns** has been linked to migraines. When your body is not well rested, it can affect hormone production and your pain threshold is also reduced.
- **Caffeine** has shown to trigger migraines in two ways: either by drinking coffee/ caffeinated drinks or from the withdrawal of drinking caffeine (i.e., when you stop drinking coffee). Caffeine can cause dehydration, reduce magnesium levels (a mineral needed for neuromuscular activity) and increase blood pressure; all of which are linked to migraines.

- **Alcohol** contains the chemicals histamine and ethanol, both of which have been known to trigger migraines. Histamine creates inflammation in body and ethanol is a diuretic (making you urinate more often) which affects blood pressure levels.
- **Changes in weather** can also bring on a migraine. Pressure changes due to storms, “heavy” grey days and high humidity have been linked to chemical changes in the brain which can irritate nerves and increase inflammation.
- These are just some triggers that have been mentioned by some other patients. However, most trigger cause are multifactorial meaning a combination of insults that when grouped act as causative factor together. Any of these insults by themselves is benign.
- The answer is to keep a diary and note patterns.

## HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE HELP MIGRAINES?

Acupuncture is very effective in treating migraines as it stimulates nerves and pressure points in the body to relieve symptoms. An acupuncturist will insert thin, tiny needles along the pressure points to bring the body back into balance.

Acupuncture helps to:

- **Reduce tightness in the neck** by placing the needles along trigger points where muscles are constricted.

- **Stimulate the release of endorphins which reduce pain** and create feelings of wellbeing.
- **Promote healthy blood circulation** by downregulating inflammation and modulating the chemicals in the brain that control the constriction and dilation of blood vessels. When blood vessels constrict (narrow), migraine symptoms are alleviated.
- **Reduce stress levels and encourage relaxation** by regulating hormone levels. The hormones cortisol, serotonin, noradrenaline and dopamine are involved in how the body responds to stress; when these hormones are balanced, your body will adapt to stress more efficiently. An imbalance in serotonin levels in the brain is linked to the onset of migraines.
- **Improve immune function** which helps regulate inflammation and the production of prostaglandins (pain-promoting hormones).

## **HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU GET ACUPUNCTURE FOR MIGRAINES?**

Using acupuncture for the treatment of migraines can be very beneficial. The number of acupuncture sessions you'll require depends on your personal constitution, medical history, the severity and occurrence of your migraines and how quickly your body responds to the acupuncture treatment. We recommend coming in once to twice per week for four to six weeks as a starting point depending on your individual condition.

## **RELIEVE MIGRAINES WITH ACUPUNCTURE**

Acupuncture has proven effective in treating migraine symptoms and restoring balance to the body by reducing pain, inflammation and neck muscle tightness. It also helps to promote relaxation and regulate serotonin levels in the brain. If you want to manage your migraines naturally, speak to our experienced acupuncturists today.