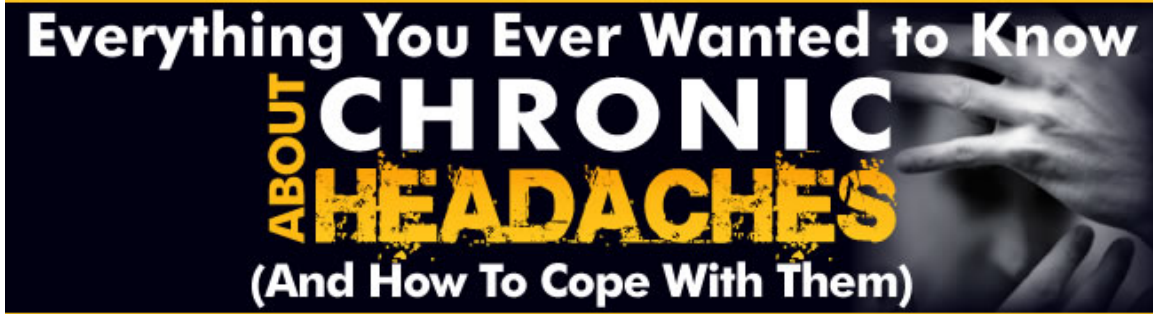


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**Everything You Ever Wanted to
Know About Chronic Headaches**

(And How To Cope With Them)

by Douglas Hanna

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About the Author

Douglas Hanna is a retired advertising and marketing executive. He lives in a suburb of Denver, Colorado with his wife and two dogs.

Douglas has written more than 225 articles on a variety of subjects. He has done extensive research on chronic headaches as he has been a headache sufferer since his teen years.

Douglas knows from personal experience the profound and disabling effect that chronic headaches can have on your life as he had them since he was a teenager.

Sometimes, these headaches were so severe that he couldn't even function and had to spend hours sitting in a dark room. Or, he would try to sleep, hoping that he would feel better when he woke up.

Today, he rarely experiences headaches that debilitating. Instead, his headaches are usually on the milder side; "just serious enough to put a damper on my day, or to make it difficult for me to sleep."

He saw several different doctors about his headaches but could never get a definitive diagnosis. The closest he came was one doctor who said that his chronic headaches were in the "migraine family".

Given these experiences, he decided to learn everything he could about chronic headaches; what they were and how to best prevent or treat them.

His book is dedicated to all those of you who live with chronic headaches like Douglas used to.

Introduction

There are many different kinds of headaches. However, there are five major types.

They are migraine headaches, cluster headaches, tension headaches, chronic daily headaches, and rebound headaches.

Because these are the kinds of headaches that affect the vast majority of sufferers, I cover only these types in this book. I believe the information you will find in this book will help you better understand what kind of headaches you have, why you suffer from these headaches, and what you can do to cope with them and improve the quality of your life.

What You will Learn from this Book

This book focuses on the four most common types of chronic headaches:

Migraine headaches

Cluster headaches

Tension headaches and

Chronic daily headaches.

If you suffer from chronic headaches but don't know which kind, you will learn the symptoms of these four headache types to help you begin an accurate diagnosis.

You will learn about headache triggers, including:

- Eating and sleeping patterns
- Environmental factors
- Vision
- Medication
- Physical exertion
- Diet and foods

An important part of headache treatment and relief is to get the right diagnosis.

In [Chapter 5](#), you will learn:

- The importance of a headache diary
- What to do to get ready for your initial visit to a doctor
- What your physical examination will be like
- Other diagnostic tools your doctor may use

If your problem is migraine headaches, you might want to go directly to [Chapter 6](#), which will teach you:

- ✓ How to choose an effective treatment
- ✓ Understanding the prescription drugs that are most commonly used in migraine treatment
- ✓ Which techniques are used most often to treat specific types of migraines
- ✓ The use of triptans in treating migraines
- ✓ Ergotamine tartrate and migraine treatment
- ✓ What DHE is and how it is used to treat migraines
- ✓ Isometheptene Mucate and migraines
- ✓ Which nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) are used to treat migraines
- ✓ Phenethiazines and migraines
- ✓ The use of Intranasal Lidocaine in migraine treatment
- ✓ Narcotic analgesics and migraines
- ✓ Antinauseants and migraines
- ✓ The use of cold packs in migraine treatment

Information on treating and living with cluster headaches can be found in [Chapter 7](#) where you will learn:

- ✓ How to prevent cluster headaches
- ✓ How to stop a cluster headache that has already started

You will find chronic daily headaches treated in [Chapter 8](#), which has a lengthy section on preventative medications.

If you are suffering from tension headaches, [Chapter 9](#) will teach you:

- ✓ What episodic tension-type headaches are
- ✓ How to recognize chronic tension headaches
- ✓ Preventing tension-type headaches
- ✓ Treatments for tension-type headaches

In [Chapter 10](#), you will learn about the many different kinds of [alternate treatments](#) and [self-help techniques](#) available to combat chronic headaches.

There is also a [comprehensive chart](#) of alternate headache treatments and self-help techniques, highlighting which ones can be used effectively to treat specific types of headaches.

[Chapter 11](#) will teach you about using natural supplements in the treatment of chronic headaches. Here, you will learn:

- ✓ What natural supplements are
- ✓ Who Takes Natural Supplements
- ✓ Herbs and supplements used in the treatment of headaches
- ✓ A new supplement that may be useful in treating all types of chronic headaches

Finally, [Chapter 12](#) is all about online resources for headache sufferers. This includes:

- ✓ Forums
- ✓ Groups and Newsgroups
- ✓ Websites

1. Facts about Headaches

If you suffer from headaches, you are not alone. It was recently reported that during the past year nearly 90% of men and 90% of women reported having experienced at least one headache.

Here's another interesting statistic. Did you know that more than 28 million Americans suffer from migraine headaches? And that another 1.5 million Americans suffer from trauma headaches?

On the other hand, only about one half percent of our population suffer from cluster headaches, and that they are predominantly men -- as 80% of those who suffer from cluster headaches are male.

It is also interesting to note that the onset of cluster headaches typically occurs in the late 20s, but that there is no absolute age restriction. Statistics also show that approximately 80% of cluster headaches are episodic -- the remaining 20% are considered chronic.

For that matter, nearly everyone will have at least one tension headache in his or her lifetime. And approximately 3% of our population suffers from chronic tension-type headaches.

If you suffer from migraine headaches, you are actually in good company. Many famous people have suffered from migraines, including Julius Caesar, Joan of Arc, Karl Marx, George Bernard Shaw, Saint Paul, Thomas Jefferson, Edgar Allan Poe, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Pablo Picasso, Lewis Carroll, Sigmund Freud and Vincent Van Gogh.

Headache Myths

Headaches may be one of the most misunderstood medical conditions in America. There are at least five serious myths about headaches.

For example, one is that **all headaches the same**, which is clearly not the case.

Another is that **increased levels of stress cause chronic headaches**. The correlation between stress and headache is certainly true for some people but not for others.

This is where the confusion arises.

Stress may very well trigger a headache in someone who is susceptible to migraines but, if a person is not susceptible to headaches, it is unlikely that one will be triggered by rising levels of stress.

Another prevalent myth about headaches is that **headaches are all in your head**. You cannot just imagine or cause a headache to occur.

Headaches are a medical condition caused by physiological events that can be diagnosed and treated just like appendicitis or arthritis.

They require medical care and self-care measures to manage them, just like other chronic conditions.

Did you know that headaches are more prevalent during early adulthood and often become less common after middle age?

For example, migraine headaches are most common in people aged 25 to 55, which unfortunately, is a time when most of us are in our peak work years.

Migraine headaches are experienced more by women than men.

The reason for this may be that migraine headaches can be influenced by changes in hormonal levels, such as those that occur during a woman's menstrual cycle or during pregnancy.

But then, men also get migraines and not all women do.

And, most women who suffer from migraines experience them throughout the month, even when their hormones are not fluctuating.

Here is another fact that is sad but true. Regardless of all those advertisements you see on television or the articles you may read in some publications, **there is no “miracle” drug that can stop headaches in minutes** and not all headaches can be wiped away by taking any pill.

While various medications can play a vital part in treating headaches, the most effective drug therapies often require a combination of drugs.

It is also sad but true that relatives, friends and co-workers often may not understand the impact that headaches have on a person's performance.

For that matter, people suffering from chronic headaches often believe that they themselves are to blame. This misperception can actually work to prevent people from seeking help for their headaches.

Another common misconception is when some people think that you are suffering from headaches **because there is something wrong with you emotionally**.

This is also untrue. Chronic headaches are not the sign of psychological or mental problems. They're a biological disorder. While it is true that some people who have mental health problems do get headaches, the headaches are not necessarily because of these problems. It is also true that while people who are suffering the pain of a throbbing headache may be calm angry, irritable or moody, this does not mean they have a mental disorder. Headaches are an established medical condition.

You cannot just imagine or cause a headache to occur. Headaches are not just a complaint from someone who is acting hysterically or who is a hypochondriac.

Headaches are a medical condition caused by physiological events.

They require medical care and self-care measures to manage them, just like any other chronic condition.

Are you a guy? Then you should pay attention to this -- men are especially reluctant to see a doctor about chronic headaches because they don't wish to appear unable to handle the problem on their own. But, seeing a doctor is exactly what they should do.

Another misconception is that **people complain about headaches who cannot handle pain**. There is no scientific evidence that suggests that people with severe migraine headaches, for example, are more sensitive to pain than people who do not have migraines.

In fact, many people are able to carry on with everyday activities despite their migraine headaches, which shows they are resilient.

Finally, some people think that **sinus headaches are chronic headaches**. The fact is that sinus headaches occur only when you have sinusitis or infected sinuses – in other words only once in a while and only for a short time.

If you have chronic headaches and believed it was because of your sinuses, you need to stop thinking this and find out what kind of headaches you really have.

As you'll read in this book, there are medications you can take to stop or end a headache, and there are drugs and methodologies you can use to lessen the effect of your headaches.

But, anyone who tries to tell you that there is one medication, alternative treatment or supplement that can permanently "cure" your chronic headaches, is just not telling you the truth.

2. General Information about Headaches

Did you know that the brain itself is not sensitive to pain? This is because it lacks pain-sensitive nerve fibers. There are several areas of the head that can hurt, including a network of nerves that extends over the scalp, and there are certain nerves in the face, mouth, and throat that can hurt.

However, the meninges and the blood vessels do have pain perception. As a result, irritation of the meninges and blood vessels can result in headaches.

The muscles of the head may also be sensitive to pain.

Pain in the neck or upper back may also be interpreted as headache. It ranks among the most common of local pain complaints.

What Causes Headaches?

There are a wide variety of headache causes. These range from eyestrain and sinusitis to life-threatening conditions such as encephalitis, meningitis, cerebral aneurysms and brain tumors.

In some cases it is very easy to determine what is causing your headaches. If you suffered head trauma and now have chronic headaches, it is easy to figure out what caused them.

On the other hand, the causes of many other types of headaches are still not well understood.

At one time, scientists and doctors believed that migraine headaches were caused by the constriction and dilation of blood vessels and that tension headaches were caused by muscle contraction.

While scientists still believe that these play a part in causing headaches, a much more complicated explanation is beginning to emerge.

Many scientists now speculate that both migraine and tension headaches have the same origin in the brain.

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