



## HEADACHES: CAUSES AND CURES

By Various Authorities and Medical Writers

### HEADACHES, AVOIDABLE AND CURABLE

By B. F. Herrick, M. D.

**I**N A LARGE majority of cases headaches arise from a state of general debility or nervousness, brought about by overwork, overstudy, carelessness or a sedentary life, and though medicine is often indispensable in building up the health the surest and most agreeable remedy for freeing the head from pain will be found in leading a continuous out-of-door life, with plenty of nourishing food, some light and congenial occupation, and, as far as possible, freedom from care and anxiety.

A hot bath, a stroll in the fresh air, shampooing the head in weak soda-water, or a timely nap in a cool, quiet room will sometimes stop a nervous headache. When overfatigued from shopping or sightseeing a sponge dipped in very hot water and pressed repeatedly over the back of the neck between the ears will be found exceedingly refreshing, especially if the face and temples are afterward subjected to the same treatment. Neuralgia is caused not only by cold air, but by acidity of the stomach, starved nerves, imperfect teeth, or by indolence combined with a too generous diet. Heat is the best and quickest cure for this distressing pain. A hot flat-iron, passed rapidly and deftly over several folds of flannel laid on the affected spot will often give relief in less than ten minutes, without the aid of medicine. Hot fomentations are of equal value; though when the skin is very tender it is more advisable to use dry heat, nothing being better for the purpose than bags of heated salt, flour or sand, which retain warmth for a long time. Cold water, applied by the finger tips to the nerves in front of the ear, has been known to dispel neuralgic pains like magic. When caused by acidity a dose of charcoal or soda will usually act as a corrective. Sick headache is accompanied by bilious symptoms, and attacks usually come on when the person is overtired or below par physically. This is a disease of the first half of life, and often stops of its own accord after middle age. A careful diet is imperative in every case, sweetmeats and pastry being especially pernicious.

Eating heartily when very tired, late dinners, eating irregularly, insufficient mastication or too much animal food, especially in the spring or during hot weather, are frequent causes of indigestion, causing headaches by reflex action.

**A**N INACTIVE skin throws much extra work on the internal organs, which become enfeebled or worn out in consequence. Frequent bathing, especially in salt water, abundant exercise and thorough friction with a Turkish towel or a flesh-brush are the best tonics for the skin and muscles, and greatly aid the circulation. Cold baths should not be indulged in by very thin, bloodless people; extremely hot ones, on the other hand, are exceedingly debilitating. Breathing with only the upper half of the lungs deprives the body of much of the requisite amount of oxygen; the inhalations should always be through the nose, and not the mouth. The habit of deep breathing, once established, becomes readily second nature.

Cold feet and headaches are inseparable. Hot footbaths nightly, with energetic rubbing, and regular walking in the daytime, with sensible shoes and stockings, will generally effect a cure if faithfully and regularly persevered in. Not a few spinal and nervous troubles have been traced back to tight, high-heeled shoes, which, like tight belts and corsets, cause congestion of the brain, and its most evil and dangerous symptom, violent pain in the head.

Persistent headaches, which stubbornly resist the best medical skill, have frequently been found to result from internal eye troubles, or from muscular weakness of the eyeball, the prominent symptoms being nausea, vertigo or dizziness, and chronic fatigue of the brain. In such cases glasses fitted by a reliable oculist will often bring relief.

The abuse of tea, coffee or other stimulants; sea-bathing, long, heavy hair, a superabundance of hairpins, or a tight, strained manner of hair-dressing; cold, close or overheated rooms, or apartments heated by gas or kerosene; a stooping position, or an improper way of walking; jarring the brain and spine; hot sun or a north wind; false hair, poor blood and unsteady circulation; sleeplessness, and general dullness from lack of an object in life, are all capable of producing headache, and "the discovery of the cause is usually the discovery of the remedy."

### CAUSES OF HEADACHE

By Cyrus Edson, M. D.

Ex-President of the New York Board of Health

**I**N CONSIDERING the subject of headache we should never lose sight of the fact that we are studying merely a symptom and not a disease. Pain, and especially the pain under consideration, is a danger signal set by nature to warn the sufferer that a deep-seated malady threatens the body. A celebrated physician once called pain "the prayer of a nerve for healthy blood." No truer saying was ever uttered. A sufferer from headaches that recur and persist should always consult a competent physician, and give him an opportunity to make a careful study of the case. The cause may not be at once apparent; both sufferer and doctor may have their patience sorely tried, but time and a thorough study of the case, eliminating different possible causes, will finally develop the real cause and point the road to a radical cure. To understand the difficulties in the way of diagnosis in the cause of headache one should know how many different kinds are recognized and described by medical writers: Anæmic headache; hyperæmic or congestive headache; nervous or cerebral headache, which is subdivided into two kinds—cerebro hyperæmic and cerebro anæmic headache; toxic headache; sympathetic headache; bilious headache and organic headache.

**H**HEADACHE may be caused, first, by diseased conditions of the blood; second, by nervous irritation; third, by inflammation of the nerves of the head or of tissues adjacent to them. The last cause is the most infrequent, and is scarcely possible to discuss in an article of this character. Briefly, however, I would say it can be generally distinguished from the other two, both of which are irritative conditions, by the fact that pressure over the acting parts increases the pain, while in the case of irritative headache pressure more or less relieves it. A medical axiom is: "The pain of inflammation is increased by pressure, while the pain of irritation is relieved."

The ordinary headache which is so extremely common among the inhabitants of our Atlantic seaboard towns is a combination of the first and second causes. It is the outcome of conditions affecting the nerves through impoverished blood containing poisonous matter absorbed from badly-digested food. So-called liver torpidity and the catarrhal affections due to our changeable climate also aid in effecting its spread. Nervous exhaustion, due to irregular and fast living, plays an important part in its causation. Nervous strain, especially of the eyes, and inflamed tissues about the internal bones of the nose are special causes. Nerve irritation, which is but poorly understood by the general reader, is a prolific cause of so-called nervous headache.

To understand this, one should know that the nerves terminate throughout the body—in the muscles, on the skin and mucous membrane surfaces—in delicate, sensitive filaments and little round bodies called corpuscles, that affect the operations of the will or control involuntary functions such as digestion, the heart's action, etc. Continued irritation of these nerve terminals at any point in the system will cause headache.

**I** KNOW of no more dangerous practice than to treat headache pain blindly with drugs, unless it be to treat insomnia with sedatives.

Both lines of treatment lead to the abuse of anodynes and hypnotics, and as a usual thing result in a continued condition of invalidism.

One very common cause of headache, which, if not the only cause, is, at least, a great factor in it, and amenable to home treatment with medicine, is constipation. Of course, outdoor exercise is the best possible thing for permanent cure. It is very easy to relieve most forms of headache by means of the coal-tar derivatives, of which so many are in the drug market. These form the basis of the many headache cures found on the druggists' shelves. Their use is not entirely without danger, for they are powerful heart depressants if taken in doses of any considerable size.

After all, the best treatment for headache is preventive, and if we would all follow Kant's golden rule in disposing of each day, allotting eight hours for work, eight hours for play and eight for sleep, we would soon leave headaches and the ills attending them behind.

### WHEN THE EYES CAUSE HEADACHE

By a Specialist

**T**HE headache which has for its principal cause a diseased or unhealthy condition of the eyes is one of the most common and least recognized of the many varieties of headache. Its usual symptoms are pain in the eyes, temples and over the brows, while in a few exceptional cases an acute aching at the back of the head and neck is also felt. Even when these symptoms are not present any sensitiveness of the eyes to light or glare, any symptoms of inflammation or redness should receive the most prompt medical examination and treatment, as in its earlier stages such inflammation yields readily to treatment, but when neglected often leads to very serious complications.

It is important not only to secure medical treatment for any such symptoms, but it is of supreme importance that such treatment shall be administered, not only by skillful physicians, but, whenever possible, by an oculist who is both specialist and physician. So often the condition requires the treatment of the specialist that the average general practitioner refers cases of headache of this kind immediately to an oculist. Patients should have the same wisdom. Whenever a child complains of headache its eyes should immediately be examined, as, unless there is some stoppage of the nostrils, the eyes are the usual seat of trouble. Headaches from other causes seem entirely a habit of adult life.

Few people, perhaps, know how valuable a stimulant is the application of hot water to the eyes. Its value as a part of ophthalmic therapeutics is universally recognized by physicians.

The growing practice of permitting opticians to prescribe as well as to manufacture glasses cannot be too strongly protested against. Valuable as glasses often are in affording relief in cases of eye strain causing severe and chronic headache or inflammation, their use must often be supplemented by the most careful medical care and attention. This double treatment, of course, is impossible for the optician, whose work should be that of manufacturing glasses, not of prescribing them. Often, indeed, a diseased physical condition must be remedied before glasses are useful at all, and there again the physician is needed.

There has been in the last twenty years as notable an increase in eye headaches and troubles as there has been in the number of opticians and eyeglass furnishing establishments. Twenty years ago one could not find in any of our large cities more than two optical houses able to grind lenses and do thorough work. Now they may be counted by the scores. Their growth has, of course, been in proportion to the demand for their products. The relative increase of our American city populations—an increase which gives people less invigorating surroundings, and compels a less invigorating manner of life than the rural existence, thus lessening physical strength—which compels a greater use of artificial light, with the consequent temptation to use the eyes for longer hours, which brings with it increased school facilities, requiring longer hours of study and an overcrowding of school rooms—this increase of urban population with the attendant circumstances is responsible for the greater amount of ocular troubles, eye headaches and the like.

Of course, with this growth of trouble and treatment there must be some cases of overtreatment, but the danger from this cause is very slight.

### SIMPLE CURES FOR HEADACHE

By Two Eminent Medical Men

**T**HE following prescription is for an adult, and must not, under any circumstances, be given to a child:

**R**  
 Cascarin . . . . . gr. ½  
 Aloin . . . . . gr. ¼  
 Podophyllin . . . . . gr. ¼  
 Ext. Belladonna . . . . . gr. ¼

Ft. Pill No. 1/1  
 Sig., one at bedtime.  
 Tonic Laxative Pill

CYRUS EDSON, M. D.

### FOR NEURALGIC HEADACHE

A SIMPLE TREATMENT

**A** TEASPOONFUL of phosphate of sodium in a half tumblerful of hot water every morning, a half hour before breakfast.

**R**  
 Ext. Indian Hemp . . . . . gr. ½  
 Ext. Nux. Vomica . . . . . gr. ¼  
 Lactate of Iron . . . . . gr. 1 j

Ft. Pill No. j  
 Sig., one three times a day after eating.

### FOR PAROXYSM OF HEADACHE

**R**  
 Sodii Salicylat . . . . . gr. ½  
 Acetanilid . . . . . ʒʒ gr. i jss  
 Caffein . . . . . gr. ss

Ft. Pulv. or capsule No. j  
 Sig., one every half hour until relieved, or until four have been taken.

WHARTON SINKLER, M. D.