

# Headaches, Migraines and Neck Pain

Do you know others who battle with headaches, migraines and/or neck pain? The head and neck are the most vulnerable parts of the body, especially the spine inside your neck. Not only does the neck support the head (which weighs approximately 10-15 pounds), but it also allows forward, backward, lateral and rotational movement of your head. In addition, it must transmit the flow of nerve impulses through your spinal cord to your head, face, hands and the rest of your body. Besides discomfort and annoyance, chronic neck pain and headaches are a sign that something is wrong.

Many everyday things can cause neck pain and headaches, such as watching TV, using your computer, reading a book or falling asleep in a chair or on an airplane. The temporary pain that results can resolve on its own, especially when the offending activity is discontinued. However, this doesn't mean the problem is gone....You may be carrying around a more serious condition.

Bad posture is a lifetime scenario for most people. If your head weighs 10 pounds (which is the typical load) and is in alignment directly above your shoulder, the effective load on your spinal tissues is just 10 pounds. However, if your head has moved forward, the load is increased by a factor of ten with each additional inch of forward posture. SO, if you are carrying your head 2 inches forward of where it should be, your head is loading 30 pounds to the supporting tissues. If you are carrying it 3 inches forward of where it should be, then 40 pounds of pressure is being stressed through your neck and shoulders. As a result, your health and performance can decrease while the neck pain, headaches and fatigue that often come with living with these problems increase!

In fact, when your head is carried forward for many years, there is a greater incidence of developing arthritis in the spine. Bad posture also affects the soft tissues and can change the blood flow to the spinal cord itself. Forward posture has also been associated with disc damage. Sustained poor posture robs the muscles of oxygen and causes tissue damage. Tendons, ligaments and discs undergo changes that can become permanent. This is probably why many individuals who have bad posture cannot correct it by themselves!

Daily poor posture could be costing you thousands! A recent study has revealed that those who suffer from chronic back pain for one year may experience a reduction in the brain's grey matter equivalent to the average person going through 10 to 20 years of normal aging. It's no surprise that research has found that posture affects and moderates every physiological

function, from breathing to hormonal production. Spinal pain, headache, mood, blood pressure, pulse and lung capacity are among the functions most easily influenced by posture.

The most common cause of neck pain is functional distortions in the spine resulting from vertebral subluxations. These subluxations are seen in cases of reverse cervical curve, whiplash and joint instability. The body responds by tightening muscles in the neck, "splinting" the joint to protect it from further insult. Chiropractic care can help.

Most of the pain-sensing nerves in the neck are located in the pairs of facet joints on the back side of each vertebra. These smooth, interlocking surfaces allow you to rotate your head and bend your head up and down. If these joints become locked or fixated, neck pain can result. Chiropractic care can help restore proper joint motion.

A more difficult problem to correct is the degenerative changes that result from neglect. Years of uncorrected spinal problems can cause bone spurs, disc thinning and other forms of spinal decay. These types of problems respond more slowly, and some type of ongoing supportive chiropractic care may be necessary.

Our response to stress is another common cause of neck pain. Deadlines. Rush-hour traffic. Over-committing ourselves. Work pressures. Family obligations. Did you ever meet someone who was a "pain in the neck?" Each of us is susceptible to our body's unconscious response to people and circumstances. These perceptions can show up as episodes of neck pain.

If the weakest link in our bodies is our neck, stress shows up there. While chiropractic care cannot reduce the stress of your busy life, it can help improve your ability to handle and tolerate it. More importantly, it can do this without the dangers and complications of drugs or surgery!

**Call our office today to schedule a consultation to discuss your health concerns.**

**Ferguson Family Chiropractic  
383.5595  
[www.ForLifetimeWellness.com](http://www.ForLifetimeWellness.com)**