

NATIONAL HEADACHE FOUNDATION

FACT SHEET

- ◆ Over 45 million Americans get chronic, recurring headaches. This is more than the 33 million sufferers of asthma, diabetes and coronary heart disease combined.
- ◆ 29.5 million suffer from migraines annually. One in 4 households has at least one migraine sufferer.
- ◆ It is estimated that industry loses \$50 billion per year due to absenteeism and medical expenses caused by headache, and migraine sufferers lose more than 157 million workdays each year.
- ◆ In excess of 4 billion dollars are spent annually on over-the-counter pain relievers for headache. (Many of these are ineffective for the headache sufferer.)
- ◆ Seventy percent of all migraine sufferers are women.
- ◆ The basic categories of headaches are:

Primary or benign (not due to other underlying problem):

Tension-type headache, migraine, cluster headache.

Secondary (due to another underlying cause):

Headaches related to tumor, infection, or diseases of the brain, eye, ear, nose, etc.

Tension-Type Headache

Approximately 78 percent of all headaches are classified as tension-type headache. The pain is typically generalized all over the head. There appears to be a slightly higher incidence of this type of headache among women.

There are two types of tension-type headache: those that occur on an episodic basis and those that occur daily or almost daily. If chronic, this type of headache should be promptly treated to avoid developing an addiction to pain relieving drugs. The daily headache is often accompanied by depression, or other emotional problems, and sleep disturbance.

Migraine

Migraine headaches can be hereditary. If both parents have them, there is a 75 percent chance their children will have them; when only one parent is a migraine sufferer, there is a 50 percent chance the child will be afflicted. If even a distant relative has migraine headaches, a 20 percent chance exists that any offspring will be prone to migraine headaches.

Recent research has proven that migraines do have physical causes; and triggers for many sufferers include diet, stress, menstruation, and environmental changes. The length of a migraine attack can last from several hours to several days. These attacks can be incapacitating, interfering with usual activities.

Cluster

There are an estimated one million cluster headache sufferers in the United States, of whom 10 percent are afflicted with chronic cluster. These appear to primarily affect men with 80 percent of the sufferers being male. Although cluster headaches produce some of the most severe pain that a physician will see, they can go into long periods of remission. No cause has been determined for this type of headache, but most can be controlled with adequate treatment.

Headache in Children

Children do experience headache. Most are due to migraine or emotional problems. However, if headache occurs in the very young or very old, it is important to rule out organic disease. Young tension-type and migraine sufferers can usually benefit from non-drug treatments such as biofeedback and use of appropriate medications.

- ◆ Founded in 1970, the National Headache Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to three major goals:
 1. to serve as an information resource to headache sufferers, their families and the healthcare practitioners who treat them;
 2. to promote research into potential headache causes and treatments; and
 3. to educate the public to the fact that headaches are a legitimate disease and that sufferers should receive understanding and continuity of care.
- ◆ The NHF offers its members an award-winning bimonthly newsletter, ***NHF Head Lines***, for an annual fee of \$20.00 to receive it electronically via our Web site, www.headaches.org, or \$25.00 to receive a printed copy through the U.S. mail.
- ◆ For more information, contact the NHF at:

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