

Stop Your Headaches

(Easy as Black and White!)

2% of all headaches are from life threatening causes such as brain tumors or aneurysms. Therefore, **98%** are caused by factors, which you can eliminate or reduce. Sometimes expensive tests are necessary but not in **98%** of the cases. Those **98%** DO NOT need expensive tests such as CAT scans etc. This book deals with both types.

This book will help you to solve your headaches or it will help to refer you to the correct doctor for your symptoms - saving you money, time and headaches!

A doctor cannot follow you around for 24 hours per day while they look for the source of your headaches but this book will do that!

Different professionals will initially focus on different “causes” when they hear the word headache, for example:

Neurologist ----- nerve disorders etc.
E.N.T. (ear-nose-throat)--sinus problems, inner ear problems etc.
Family practice -----high blood pressure, tumor, stroke etc.
Ob-gyn-----estrogen supplements, birth control pills etc.
Sports medicine----- --irregular exercise, recent injury etc.
Optometrist -----outdated prescription, need for a bifocal etc.
Chiropractor -----bad posture, pinched nerve etc.
Dentist -----T.M.J. problems, infected tooth etc.
Psychologist-----stress from relationship problems, emotional problems etc.
Pharmacist-----drug interaction, sudden stoppage of a drug etc.
Nutritionist-----recent diet, food allergies etc.
Nurse-----diabetes, hypoglycemia etc.

This book contains sections on:

1. Introduction
2. Headaches which need IMMEDIATE attention.
3. History of your headaches - Simply fill in the blanks.
4. Possible Sources of your headaches. List of 169 most common causes of headaches - You check the ones that apply to you.
5. Investigating your **YES** answers from “section 4”.
6. Tips on “relieving stress”. Alternative methods to solve headaches.
7. Headache Diary
8. Conclusion

Section 1

Introduction

This book will ask you over 150 questions which may seem unimportant but could be related to your headaches, for example:

1. Do you wear your glasses all the time? (Some doctors may see you wearing them and assume you wear them all the time.)
2. Do you hold your reading material too closely?
3. Have you been on a diet and skipping meals?

The source of most headaches can be discovered and reduced by a thorough and accurate investigation of your headaches. It is impossible for a doctor to discuss the hundreds of possible sources of your headaches during a single office visit. If you go to a headache clinic, they will spend hours with you and it will be very expensive because headaches are complex and many questions must be asked and answered. This book will accomplish the same goal but you can answer each question in a relaxed setting - when your head isn't throbbing - and for a few dollars instead of hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

Section TWO will describe headaches, which need IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. If you have any of the symptoms described, go to your medical doctor immediately. Some of these headaches can result from conditions, which can be fatal.

Section THREE will take a history of your headaches. It will ask you key questions and give you advice based on your answers.

Section FOUR will list 169 causes of headaches - some common and some rare. Simply read the question and check NO or YES.

Section FIVE will investigate all of your YES answers from the previous section to determine if that particular cause may be the source of your headaches.

Section SIX gives tips on RELIEVING STRESS.

Section SEVEN will explain how to fill out a headache diary.

When I have a patient who had headaches, I direct my questions toward their symptoms but if I cannot find the source of their headaches, I do what most doctors do. I tell them to keep a headache diary because with a thorough and accurate history of their headaches, most headaches can be solved very inexpensively. I know that I cannot ask every question and that if I miss even one important question, I may miss the cause of their headaches. This book will ask you over 150 questions and that will give you your best chance of solving your headaches.

When you fill out the headache diary, you will be aware of many possible sources of your headaches from reading this book and you can document the ones you encountered prior to your headaches. Then you may notice a pattern, for example, I get a headache every time: I read for more than 15 minutes or when I forget one of my pills or when I have a

deadline to meet or every 28 days or every day that I go to work etc. Then, you are on the way to stopping or reducing your headaches!

The headache diary will try to determine patterns to your headaches and then it will methodically break it down even further, for example, if you get headaches every time you read for 15 minutes, it will consider the following: Do you need a bifocal? Do you hold your reading material too closely? Is there excessive glare on your reading material? Are you holding your reading material the wrong distance for your bifocal? Are your bifocals too high or low etc. Then it will explain how to evaluate each possibility to determine exactly which one is the source of your headaches.

This book is designed so that only the “yes” answers need to be investigated. All “yes” answers are in the right column so you can easily scan for them. If you mark “yes” to an answer, you can go to the next section to investigate that as the possible causes of your headaches.

This book is designed to help you to investigate your headaches thoroughly on your own time and therefore you can give your doctor very significant information. If you do not have a doctor, it will help to refer you to the correct doctor.

If, after reviewing this book, your headaches continue, I strongly recommend that you seek medical attention. If the book has helped to direct you to a specific type of doctor, go to them. If you are not sure which doctor to go to, go to your family doctor.

Section 2

Headaches which need immediate attention

If any of the following are related to your headaches, you should consult your family medical doctor IMMEDIATELY:

- stiff neck
- persistent or severe vomiting
- loss of speech
- it is the “worst headache you have ever had”
- tenderness of the scalp (pain with combing your hair)
- progressively worsening headaches in duration or intensity
- sudden onset of a severe headache
- headaches began after you were 50 years old
- fever
- shortness of breath
- numbness in your fingers, arms, legs or toes
- headaches occur with exertion (ex. exercise, coughing, straining or sexual activity etc.)
- headache that never stops
- a serious medical condition
- a serious head, neck or back injury
- drowsiness or mental confusion
- chronic malaise (an indefinite feeling that you “just aren’t healthy”)
- weakness, clumsiness or loss of balance
- a “tingling” around your lips
- pain while chewing
- muscle pain
- joint pain
- sweating
- swollen eyelids
- your eyes produce extra “tears” during the headaches
- progressively worsening visual problems

Section 3

History of your headaches

Your age: _____ years

Your sex: M _____ F _____

In your immediate family, who has headaches similar to yours?

(* If every member of your family has sinus headaches, your headaches may be hereditary but sinus medications or an ENT referral may help. If every member of your family got their headaches at the same time, maybe you have a gas or carbon monoxide leak in the house or you just repainted a room. If you are the only one with the headaches, this book will help you to narrow down the possible sources.)

When did this series of headaches begin?

(* If they began just after you began working a different shift or an extra job or got a divorce etc, document that.)

How often do you have them?

(* If they never go away or you almost always have one, seek medical attention immediately.)

Do your headaches only happen when you are at work, off duty, or do they happen anytime? _____

Do your headaches get better or worse or stay the same as the day goes on?

(* Morning headaches are often sinus related - as the day goes on, your sinuses drain and the headaches leave. Evening headaches are often related to eyestrain, tension etc. Constant headaches are sometimes related to serious problems ex. Aneurysms etc.)

Are your headaches getting better or worse in intensity or duration or are they staying the same?

(* If they are getting progressively worse in intensity or more often, seek medical attention immediately.)

Are your headaches associated with a sore throat or earache? (which one?)

(A Family Practice doctor, General Practitioner or ENT may be your best referral.)

When do you get your headaches? (ex. always in the morning, later in the day, if you do certain things, after reading, constantly, anytime, same time every day, only at work or only after work?)

(* If you can find an activity that causes your headaches, this book will help you to determine if that activity is causing your headaches.)

List all the medications, which you are taking. Include “over the counter “ medications also. _____

(* Birth control pills or vitamins can cause headaches or a combination of 2 or more medicines together.)

Have you had a recent unintentional weight loss?

(* This often relates to a more serious condition and you should seek medical attention immediately.)

The following questions may help you to determine what kind of headaches you are getting.

The following symptoms are **OFTEN, BUT NOT ALWAYS** associated with:

Tension headaches

- Do your headaches feel like a “dull ache”? No __ Yes __
 - Do your headaches get worse when you are in a stressful situation? No __ Yes __
 - Do your headaches feel like a “tight band” across your forehead? No __ Yes __
- (* If you’re getting ex. Tension headaches, you should read the section of the book on stress management and possibly even seek other books at the library or seek professional assistance from a stress counselor.)

Migraine headaches

- Do you see “jagged lines” or “distorted images” before your headaches? No __ Yes __
 - Do you have a loss of vision before or during your headaches? No __ Yes __
 - Do your headaches force you to sit or lie still? No __ Yes __
 - Do your headaches stop you from performing your normal activities? No __ Yes __
 - Have you ever vomited from your headaches? No __ Yes __
 - Are your headaches usually on only one side of your head? No __ Yes __
 - Do your headaches make you nauseated? No __ Yes __
 - Do your headaches “throb” and make you want to shut out all the lights and lay in a quiet room? No __ Yes __
 - Does physical activity make the headaches worse? No __ Yes __
 - Are you very sensitive to light before and during your headaches? No __ Yes __
- (* Migraine headache referrals should begin with your family medical doctor.)

Trauma related headaches

- Have you ever had a serious head, neck or back injury? No __ Yes __
- (* Depending on the injury, referral should begin with your family medical doctor or chiropractor.)

Sinus headaches

Do you have sinus problems? No Yes
Do you sometimes have a “full feeling” around your nose and eyes? No Yes
Are your headaches worse if you bend-over? No Yes
Are your headaches worse in the morning and get better as the day goes on? No Yes
(*Referral should begin with your family medical doctor or an ENT if it is severe.)

Hormone related headaches

Are your headaches associated with your menstrual cycle? No Yes
(* Referral should begin with an your family doctor.)

Dental related headaches

Do you hear a “clicking” noise coming from your jaw when you open your mouth? (in front of your ear) No Yes
Do you have any problems with your teeth? No Yes
Do you have a problem with your teeth not biting properly? No Yes
(* Referral should begin with a dentist or if severe, an oral surgeon.)

Cluster headaches

Do you feel an extremely sharp, stabbing pain on one side of your head or in one eye during your headaches? No Yes
Do you get several headaches per day? No Yes
Do you have a series of SEVERE headaches for a period of time and then they leave but later return? No Yes
Do your eyelids “droop” during your headaches? No Yes
Do your headaches cause your eyes to get red and form tears? No Yes
(* Referral should begin with your family medical doctor.)

Section 4

Possible Sources of your headaches

In the following section, if you mark “yes” to, for example #42, go to “section five” and read the comments made by the various doctors and professionals. When you fill out your headache diary, you will review all of these “possible sources” after each headache. You can use the questionnaire below for all of your headaches. Simply make a “check mark” after the No or Yes answer. (If you stop after your 5th headache, you will have a total of 5 “check marks” in your answer section.)

The absolute “key” to solving your headaches is to ask yourself, “what has happened differently since I began having my headaches?”

Relating to your eyes

1. Did you return to school? No __ Yes __
2. Are you over 40 and still do not wear bifocals or reading glasses? No __ Yes __
3. Have you changed to a new type of bifocal? No __ Yes __
4. Did you begin using a bifocal for the first time? No __ Yes __
5. Are you using your eyes more for work or for recreation? No __ Yes __
6. Are you doing more paper work? No __ Yes __
7. Do you wear glasses that need adjusting? (Did you bend them and adjust them yourself?) Do you wear your glasses “down on your nose”? No __ Yes __
8. Are you holding your reading material closer than 16 inches from your face? No __ Yes __
9. Do you notice yourself squinting due to bright sunlight or have you been working under bright or different lighting? No __ Yes __
10. Do you notice yourself squinting because things are blurry? No __ Yes __
11. Are you using a new or different pair of glasses? No __ Yes __
12. Have you been under more fluorescent lighting? No __ Yes __
13. Do your eyes seem to “pull”? No __ Yes __
14. Are there times when you do not wear your glasses? No __ Yes __
15. Do you switch between two pairs of glasses? No __ Yes __
16. Are your glasses scratched? No __ Yes __
17. Do car headlights bother you? No __ Yes __
18. Do you have a “lazy eye”? No __ Yes __
19. Does one or both eyes ever want to drift in an inward, outward, upward or downward direction? No __ Yes __
20. Do you experience “eye strain”? No __ Yes __
21. Are your bifocals too low or too high which forces you to raise your head up or down excessively to read? No __ Yes __
22. Are you reading at the wrong distance for your bifocals? (Bifocals are focused for a specific “range of vision” and if you use them outside of that range, you will get eye strain and possibly headaches.) No __ Yes __
23. Are you looking at distances, which are farther than 4 feet

- away, while using “reading glasses”? No __ Yes __
24. Do your glasses press too tightly against the sides of your head? No __ Yes __
25. Have you ever been told that you have cataracts? No __ Yes __
26. Do you or any member of your immediate family have glaucoma? No __ Yes __

Relating to stress

27. Are you going through a divorce, separation or a break-up? No __ Yes __
28. Have you started working a different shift? No __ Yes __
29. Have you had a death of someone close to you? No __ Yes __
30. Do you feel more stress than usual in your free time? No __ Yes __
31. Are you having a conflict with a friend, family member or co-worker? No __ Yes __
32. Do you face deadlines at work or after work? No __ Yes __
33. Did you quit your job or get “fired”? No __ Yes __
34. Are you starting a new job? No __ Yes __
35. Are you experiencing new financial problems? No __ Yes __
36. Are you planning a vacation or did you just return from one? No __ Yes __
37. Are you writing a book called **Stop Your Headaches**? No __ Yes __
38. Have you moved to a different house? No __ Yes __
39. Is there someone who is close to you who is ill? No __ Yes __
40. Do you feel stressed? No __ Yes __
41. Do you feel anxious? No __ Yes __
42. Do you feel fatigued? No __ Yes __
43. Do you feel depressed? No __ Yes __
44. Are you experiencing feelings of anticipation? No __ Yes __
45. Do you feel excited? No __ Yes __
46. Do you feel angry? No __ Yes __
47. Do you feel frustrated? No __ Yes __

Relating to computers or desks

48. Have you started using a computer or do you use your present computer more or are you using a different computer? No __ Yes __
49. Have your working conditions changed? Are they hotter, louder or undergoing remodeling etc? No __ Yes __
50. Are you using a different desk or chair which is taller or shorter or which changes your posture? No __ Yes __
51. Is there a glare or reflection on your computer screen? No __ Yes __

Relating to hobbies

52. Have you started a new hobby, which involves strenuous activity or fumes, such as painting or working at very close distances, such as working on models etc? No __ Yes __

Relating to medications

53. If you are taking more than one prescription medication, mark the “Yes” answer to the right.
(List them under *History of your headaches* in section 3.) No __ Yes __
54. Are you taking blood pressure medication? No __ Yes __
55. Have you started or stopped taking a medication recently? No __ Yes __
56. Have you started or stopped taking birth control pills recently or did you change to a different brand? No __ Yes __
57. Do you take nitroglycerin pills? No __ Yes __
58. Have you started or stopped taking hormone pills? No __ Yes __
59. Have you started or stopped taking estrogen supplements? No __ Yes __
60. Do you use “over the counter” medications such as aspirin or sleeping medications etc? No __ Yes __
61. Do you take vitamin supplements? No __ Yes __

Relating to hormones

62. Are your headaches related to your menstrual cycle? No __ Yes __
63. Do you experience hormonal fluctuations? No __ Yes __

Relating to your environment

64. Have you been around a hotter environment either on or off your job? No __ Yes __
65. Have you been in poorly ventilated areas? No __ Yes __
66. Do changes in the weather affect your headaches? No __ Yes __
67. Have you experienced several changes in atmospheric pressure? (ex. traveling, flying, etc.) No __ Yes __
68. Have you experienced large temperature swings? No __ Yes __
69. Have you experienced different humidity levels? No __ Yes __
70. Have you experienced extra windy conditions? (This can mean weather, which is windy or even motorcycle rides!) No __ Yes __
71. Have you moved to another climate? No __ Yes __

Relating to odors

72. Have you changed to a different perfume or deodorant? No __ Yes __
73. Have you been around scented candles or incense? No __ Yes __
74. Are you around strong odors including perfumes from other people? No __ Yes __

Relating to foods or beverages

75. Have you been skipping meals or eating irregularly? No __ Yes __
76. Have you gone on a diet? No __ Yes __

Relating to meats

Have you eaten any of the following:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----|-----|----|
| 77. bologna? | No | Yes | __ |
| 78. hot dogs? | No | Yes | __ |
| 79. summer sausage? | No | Yes | __ |
| 80. salami? | No | Yes | __ |
| 81. pepperoni? | No | Yes | __ |
| 82. liver? | No | Yes | __ |
| 83. cured meats? | No | Yes | __ |
| 84. smoked meats? | No | Yes | __ |
| 85. marinated meats? | No | Yes | __ |

Relating to fish

Have you eaten any of the following:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|----|-----|----|
| 86. fresh fish? | No | Yes | __ |
| 87. smoked or dried fish? | No | Yes | __ |
| 88. pickled herring? | No | Yes | __ |

Relating to fruits

Have you eaten any of the following:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|----|-----|----|
| 89. citrus fruits? | No | Yes | __ |
| 90. bananas? | No | Yes | __ |
| 91. figs? | No | Yes | __ |
| 92. raisins? | No | Yes | __ |
| 93. papayas? | No | Yes | __ |
| 94. kiwis? | No | Yes | __ |
| 95. plums? | No | Yes | __ |
| 96. pineapples? | No | Yes | __ |
| 97. avocados? | No | Yes | __ |

Relating to vegetables

Have you eaten any of the following :

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|-----|----|
| 98. road beans? | No | Yes | __ |
| 99. peas? | No | Yes | __ |
| 100. onions? | No | Yes | __ |
| 101. pods of broad beans ex. lima? | No | Yes | __ |
| 102. navy beans? | No | Yes | __ |
| 103. pinto beans? | No | Yes | __ |
| 104. garbanzo beans? | No | Yes | __ |

Relating to dairy products

Have you consumed any of the following:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|-----|----|
| 105. cheddar cheese? | No | Yes | __ |
| 106. brie? | No | Yes | __ |
| 107. processed cheese? | No | Yes | __ |
| 108. cheese containing tyrosine? | No | Yes | __ |
| 109. milk? | No | Yes | __ |
| 110. buttermilk | No | Yes | __ |
| 111. cream? | No | Yes | __ |
| 112. yogurt? | No | Yes | __ |
| 113. ice cream? | No | Yes | __ |

Relating to miscellaneous foods

Have you eaten any of the following:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----|----|
| 114. pickles? | No | Yes | __ |
| 115. olives? | No | Yes | __ |
| 116. sauerkraut? | No | Yes | __ |
| 117. fermented sausages? | No | Yes | __ |
| 118. vinegar? (except white vinegar) | No | Yes | __ |
| 119. foods that are fermented? | No | Yes | __ |
| 120. foods that are pickled? | No | Yes | __ |
| 121. foods that are marinated? | No | Yes | __ |

Relating to breads

Have you eaten any of the following:

- | | | | |
|---|----|-----|----|
| 122. hot fresh breads? | No | Yes | __ |
| 123. raised coffee cakes that are still warm? | No | Yes | __ |
| 124. raised doughnuts that are still warm ? | No | Yes | __ |
| 125. yeast breads? | No | Yes | __ |
| 126. white breads? | No | Yes | __ |
| 127. sour dough? | No | Yes | __ |

Relating to sweets, snacks or fats

Have you eaten any of the following:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|-----|----|
| 128. artificial sweeteners? | No | Yes | __ |
| 129. chocolates? | No | Yes | __ |
| 130. cookies made with yeast? | No | Yes | __ |
| 131. cakes made with yeast? | No | Yes | __ |
| 132. potato chip products? | No | Yes | __ |
| 133. nuts? | No | Yes | __ |
| 134. seeds - sunflower? | No | Yes | __ |

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 135. seeds - sesame? | No __ Yes __ |
| 136. seeds - pumpkin? | No __ Yes __ |
| 137. fats? | No __ Yes __ |
| 138. lard? | No __ Yes __ |

Relating to beverages

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 139. Have you been drinking more alcohol or a different type of alcohol than you normally do? | No __ Yes __ |
| 140. Have you been drinking more red wine than you normally do? | No __ Yes __ |
| 141. Have you been drinking more beverages with caffeine than you normally do? (ex. soda, tea, coffee etc.) | No __ Yes __ |
| 142. Have you been drinking more very cold drinks such as "mixed drinks" with ice in them or drinks with crushed ice? | No __ Yes __ |

Relating to seasonings

Do you eat any of the following?

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 143. Chinese food, which contains MSG? | No__ Yes__ |
| 144. flavor additives which contain MSG? | No__ Yes__ |
| 145. seasonings or spices? | No__ Yes__ |
| 146. soup from bouillon cubes? | No__ Yes__ |

Miscellaneous

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 147. Are you pregnant? | No __ Yes __ |
| 148. Have you recently had a baby? | No __ Yes __ |
| 149. Have you started or stopped exercising? | No __ Yes __ |
| 150. Have you recently been traveling more by plane? | No __ Yes __ |
| 151. Have you abruptly started or stopped a habit, for example, smoking, drinking coffee or tea etc? | No __ Yes __ |
| 152. Are your jaw muscles tense? | No __ Yes __ |
| 153. Are you or a member of your family diabetic? | No __ Yes __ |
| 154. Are you hypoglycemic? | No __ Yes __ |
| 155. Do you have bad posture? | No __ Yes __ |
| 156. Do you have high blood pressure? If you have not had it checked within the last 3 months, check it! | No __ Yes __ |
| 157. Are there any changes in your sleeping pattern. For example, have you been getting more or less sleep or sleeping different hours each week due to your work? | No __ Yes __ |
| 158. Have you had a change in your routine? (ex. exercising before work instead of after or not at all) | No __ Yes __ |
| 159. Does motion from riding in a car, train, plane or bicycle cause you to have headaches? | No __ Yes __ |
| 160. Do you lead a sedentary lifestyle? (very little exercise) | No __ Yes __ |
| 161. Do you have dentures, which bother you or have you recently had yours adjusted? | No __ Yes __ |
| 162. Do you have a problem with your teeth? | No __ Yes __ |
| 163. Do you have an overbite? | No __ Yes __ |

164. Do you have an impacted wisdom tooth? No Yes
165. Does your back or neck ache or get stiff? No Yes
166. Have you been exposed to loud noises lately? (ex. construction around your home or workplace or extra noises at your job) No Yes
167. Do you have sinus problems?
 For example: 1. congestion in your sinus area No Yes
 2. drainage in your throat No Yes
 3. head has a “full feeling” No Yes
168. Have you been taking inventory? No Yes
169. Did you recently polish your fingernails? No Yes

For all the YES answers above, please go to the next section to investigate if that “source” is the cause of your headaches.

Section 5

Investigating your YES answers from “Section 4”

The following are recommendations to your “YES” answers from “ section 4”. *The important thing to remember is that the events are more significant if your headaches began shortly after the event occurred.* (ex. Your headaches began shortly after you increased your computer usage.)

1. School involves more reading, which causes eyestrain. An eye doctor may prescribe reading glasses or bifocals if you are over 40 years of age. He or she may update your current prescription or just remind you to not hold your reading material too closely which causes extra eye strain.
2. 95% of people over the age of forty either need reading glasses or bifocals or they have to remove their glasses to read a book. If you are over the age of 40 and you do not have reading glasses or bifocals or you have to remove your glasses to read a newspaper, you should see an eye doctor to rule that out as a possible source of your headaches.
3. Bifocals either have lines or no lines. Each must be used very differently and must be measured exactly. If you switch from one type to another and headaches occur, you should return to where you bought your glasses and have them check the measurements and re-instruct you on how to use them. Also, have them make sure the prescription is correct since mistakes do happen.
4. If the bifocal is placed too high or too low, it will cause you to have neck strain and possibly headaches. The bifocal may also need to be wider or narrower or you may need to change to a different type of bifocal. Return to where you purchased your bifocals and they will know what to look for to make your glasses correct for you.
5. Using your eyes more or even at a closer distance will cause eye strain and therefore, may be the source of your headaches. See your eye doctor and tell him or her if you have to use your eyes more or if you work at unusually close distances.
6. More paper work causes more eyestrain. See your eye doctor and tell them the various distances which you need to see.
7. If your glasses are not properly adjusted, this could be the source of your headaches. If you have an astigmatism, even a slight need for an adjustment can cause a headache. Your glasses are designed to be worn close to your face. If you wear them down on your nose, the actual prescription, which you are seeing through is different from the one which the doctor gave you and that can cause headaches! Go to where you purchased the glasses and have them adjusted.
8. ***Whenever a patient tells me that they have headaches, the FIRST question I ask them is, “where do you hold your newspaper or book or whatever you***

read?” Very often, they hold it closer than 16 inches from their face. That does cause more eye strain and that will cause headaches. In fact, that is why I wrote this book. I had so many patients who experienced headaches for years but nobody had ever asked them that simple question. I also figured that there were other simple questions from other medical professions, which I had never asked. I consulted with other medical professions and I put their questions and comments and “tips” into this book also.

9. If your squinting is caused by bright sunlight, an inexpensive way to determine if this is the source of your headaches is to buy sunglasses and see if the headaches stop or get better. If they get better, you may need an even darker tint. An even less expensive way is to avoid the bright lights for a few days and see if the headaches stop but this is not always possible. If your headaches are caused by fluorescent lights at work, try tinting your glasses. If you don't wear glasses, lightly tinted sunglasses may work. *If you want to tint your glasses or wear lightly tinted sunglasses, check the “safety standards” first for your particular job since a tint may make some jobs more hazardous.* Sometimes fluorescent lights will cause a glare on computer screens, which can cause headaches and a tint will help.
10. If your squinting is because you do not see clearly, you should see your eye doctor. You may simply need glasses or a change in your prescription.
11. If your headaches began soon after you purchased new glasses, they are very likely the cause. Return to where you bought the glasses. The headaches could be due to the wrong prescription, going from one type of lens material to a different one, a different curvature of lens, incorrect measurements of the lenses or heavier glasses than your previous pair etc.
12. Fluorescent lighting may create a reflection or glare on your work area or your computer screen. If so, try to adjust your work area or monitor to decrease the reflections. If the fluorescent lighting bothers your eyes, try tinting your glasses slightly. Check local regulations since some working conditions will not allow a tint for safety reasons.
13. If your eyes seem to pull, you need to see your eye doctor who may put a “prism” into your glasses or recommend eye exercises etc. When your eyes pull, your eye muscles are strained all day and you can get headaches.
14. Simply wear your glasses all the time for two weeks and see if the headaches get better or go away. This is a source of headaches, which is easily missed because when a doctor sees you wearing glasses, they often assume you wear them all the time and they look elsewhere for the source of the headaches.
15. Only wear your most recent glasses for two weeks and see if the headaches go away.
16. Light can hit the scratches on your glasses and create a glare, which can cause headaches. It is recommended that the scratched lenses be replaced. (They may be under warranty so be sure to ask!)

17. Car headlights are bright and can be bothersome to everyone. Some people are more sensitive than others. Try “tinting” your glasses a little or wearing “lightly tinted” sunglasses to reduce the brightness. Obviously, if the tint is too dark, it will become dangerous so only use a light tint.
18. If one of your eyes is a “lazy eye”, the other eye has to do more than its share of the work, especially if you are doing a lot of reading, and that could cause headaches. The best thing to do is to see your eye doctor who will make sure your “good eye” sees as well as it possibly can. He or she may recommend eye exercises or prescribe a “prism” in your glasses.
19. If one or both eyes wants to drift in an inward, outward, upward or downward direction, that indicates that it really wants to be in a position other than the normal one. Therefore, your eye muscles must continually strain to keep the eye in the proper position and that can cause headaches. You should see your eye doctor. He or she will determine if putting a “prism” in your glasses or doing eye exercises will solve the problem. In more severe cases, where the eye wants to constantly remain in the incorrect position, you need to see an ophthalmologist who might recommend eye muscle surgery.
20. Eye strain can be caused by literally hundreds of everyday events. The headache diary will help because it will reveal anything unusual you did prior to your headaches. This will help to narrow down the possible causes of your headaches. Then, you just need to eliminate any possible cause of eyestrain. Be sure to list any activities, which could cause eyestrain in your headache diary!
21. If your bifocals are too low, you will have to constantly raise your head upwardly to read. If your bifocals are too high, you will have to tuck your chin down to drive or even walk. Both situations may give you a headache. You should return to the eye doctor who sold you the glasses and tell the doctor about your headaches and ask them to check the height of your bifocals.
22. All bifocals are focused for a specific range of clear vision. If yours are set for 16 inches and you read a book at 10 inches or 23 inches, you will be out of focus. This could cause headaches. You should return to the eye doctor where you bought the glasses. Tell him or her the different distances you need to be able to read.
23. Reading glasses are focused for a certain distance. They are for reading newspapers, books or for seeing computers etc. If you are wearing them and you look at a distance farther than 4 feet away, for example, at a clock on the wall or at a customer, you will be out of focus and may get a headache. You should visit your eye doctor and tell them the various distances, which you will use. They may recommend bifocals, trifocals or “half glasses” etc.
24. If your glasses press too tightly against the sides of your head, they can cut off the circulation of some of the arteries and veins which supply blood to your brain and they can cause headaches plus more serious problems. Return to where you bought the glasses and have them adjusted. If that isn’t possible, most optical offices will adjust them at no charge.

25. If you have been diagnosed with a cataract, light may be entering your eye and striking the cataract and scattering and creating a glare which may cause headaches. Your eye doctor can tell you if they feel the cataract is serious enough to be the source of your headaches.
26. Glaucoma can cause the pressure inside your eye to spike and cause headaches. Glaucoma has no symptoms so you won't know if you have it. If you have glaucoma in your family, you have a greater chance of having it so you should be checked by your eye doctor. If you have ever been diagnosed with glaucoma, you should have it monitored according to your eye doctor's recommendations but especially during periods of headaches. Your eye doctor will be able to tell you if they think your headaches are from glaucoma.
27. A divorce, separation or a break-up is difficult and stressful for all of those involved. There will be changes in your lifestyle, financial situation, living arrangements and in many other areas of your life. This can contribute to tension headaches. It is important to share your feelings and concerns with a trusted friend or family member. Being able to talk about your feelings will go a long way toward easing the transition. There is also professional help available if you find that you are not adjusting as well or as quickly as you would like. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)
28. If you have recently had a change in your work schedule and you have noticed that you have started to have headaches you may be experiencing tension headaches. First, rule out any increase in noises, fumes, odors, harsh lighting, more computer use etc. If none of those have changed, possibly the new hours, new job responsibilities or new co-workers are causing stress. Remember, stress is a common cause of headaches. Try to keep the same sleeping schedule on your "off days" instead of going back to your old schedule. If the headaches are due to the different working hours, the headaches should gradually decrease. If they do not, the headaches could be due to one of the other factors. Try to determine what has changed and try to eliminate it. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)
29. Grieving the loss of someone close to us can have a profound effect on us emotionally and sometimes physically. A full range of emotions can flood over us at any time ranging from sadness, anger and maybe even guilt. This can be a confusing, frightening and lonely time. Again, it is important to have someone to talk with and provide emotional support during your adjustment. Do not hesitate to seek professional help during this difficult time. Many find comfort in spiritual guidance from church or religious affiliations. Whatever it takes, make sure you take care of yourself by seeking support from those around you. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)
30. If your free time is creating stress, it is time to explore reasons or possible cause of your headaches. Maybe you are unable to relax or are tense due to unfinished work at your job. Is it possible that you bring your work home? This can rob you of precious leisure time that could recharge and rejuvenate you. Other possible causes of headaches during time at home may be concerns or conflicts in your personal life. Take the time to explore significant relationships to discover areas

where change is needed. Are you grumpy when you come home or do you avoid or withdraw from those who care about you? Are you in an abusive relationship? Maybe you have teenagers who are a source of concern. Look at your life and focus on your goals and ask yourself what you can change to improve the quality of your life. Clarifying issues gives us a sense of control and paves the way for us to take a new direction if need be. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)

31. Conflict between friends, family or co-workers can create tension and stress. It is important to address these issues . Do not ignore them and expect them to go away-they won't! Many times a conflict arises a misunderstanding or miscommunication. Make sure you understand and communicate with the significant people in your life. One easy way to do this is to repeat to them the situation, as you understand it. Ask the other person to do the same. This will enable you to clarify the situation by exposing any misinformation, misunderstandings, incorrect assumptions or preconceived notions that can lead to trouble. After this has taken place, you may discover that you simply have differing views regarding a situation. In that case, being able to compromise is important. Negotiate a solution that is agreeable to both. Maybe you will have to be flexible and you may not get everything exactly the way you want but by working out a solution that is agreeable, both sides will go a long way toward decreasing the stress in their lives. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)
32. Stress and tension headaches can plague you at the worst possible times- when you are facing deadlines. Take a look at how you manage your time. Are you waiting until the last minute to accomplish the task? Are you a procrastinator? Maybe you need to learn the art of delegating. All of these skills can be learned and put to use to reduce your stress level. Here are some tips that can help you manage time and stress:
- make a "to do" list that is prioritized. Spend time updating it each morning or evening.
 - make an anti-procrastination list that has a "start date" and a "finish date."
 - block off periods of time and make sure there are no interruptions during them.
 - break tasks into smaller parts so you aren't overwhelmed.
 - build a "reward system" into the task, i.e. "I'll go to lunch when I finish this report."
 - learn to say "no", be realistic about your time limitations.
- (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)

- 33, 34 In our society, *what you do* for a living is often equated with *who you are*. Thus, if you have quit your job or were fired, it may ignite an identity crisis and bring you "eye to eye" with self-esteem issues. Try to focus on what direction you want to take from this point. **No matter where you are going , you have to start from where you are - not from where you were!** Remember, not only do we have to fit the employer's needs, we also have to feel that the mission, vision, and culture of our workplace fits us. Dwelling on the negatives will only make you feel worse and will keep you from achieving your goals. Focus on your strong points and job skills and move to the next phase of your life. "Don't look back" If you are beginning a new job, remember that the adjustments will take time. Make sure you

have a job description so you understand what your job duties will entail. Don't be afraid to ask questions. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)

35. Many times our problems can overwhelm us to the point that we become immobilized and don't know where to start. When it comes to financial problems, it is easy to get in over your head. The first thing you will need to do is to write down everything you buy for a month. This will not be easy to do but it is the only way to find out where your money is going. Write down *everything*. That includes coffee from the drive-up window, magazines, cosmetics etc. You will never be able to come up with a "plan of attack" if you don't know where your money is going. You will probably be surprised at the amount you are spending. Once you have done this, you can see if there are areas that you can save, cut back or do without. Maybe you could explore a loan consolidation. Check with different banks to get the lowest possible interest rate. To ease the financial strain, you may need to take a more aggressive approach. Trade to an older model car, take a part time job etc. You may need consumer debt counseling. If you are offered an introductory rate for 6 months on a credit card and the interest rate is lower than what you are currently paying on your credit cards, you may want to do a "balance transfer" so you will be paying the lower interest rate for the next 6 months. (Let the lower interest rate card pay off the balance off the higher interest rate card) By then, another credit card company will probably offer you another introductory rate for the next 6 months! This can save you 12% interest and it's very easy to do. Don't let yourself get overwhelmed to the point that you do nothing. *Take action* to take control of your finances, your stress and your life. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)
36. Believe it or not, positive or happy events can be stressful too. Vacations, holidays and special events can be stressful because the expectation is that everything should be perfect and we should have the time of our life. It is not surprising that we are disappointed at anything that falls short of that. Pitfalls to avoid include: planning too many activities in the time allotted, spending more than you can reasonably afford, not tying up loose ends at work or home so you can leave with nothing "hanging over your head". Planning ahead for travel and other accommodations can ease tensions and improve your chances for a relaxing vacation. Don't forget to have a friend or neighbor feed the dog, pick up your paper and mail. Packing in advance can help you start relaxing sooner. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)
37. My headaches were due to several of the factors which I was writing about, for example, neck strain from using a computer with my bifocal, sitting for prolonged periods of time, stress from collecting and organizing all the material, lack of sleep and relaxation since I wrote this book after a full day at my optometry office. I didn't mind the headaches as much since I knew what caused them and I knew they would stop soon.
38. Headaches, which are associated with a move, could be related to various factors. Rule out fumes from new flooring, paint or various other items in your new surroundings. In addition, keep in mind that your sleep may be altered due to

different noises, activity levels, heating/cooling system of your new environment, putting in long hours to get unpacked and organized. Then there's the stress of new people and places that can add up to tension and fatigue resulting in headaches. Try to pace yourself to avoid getting overly tired. When preparing for your move, make sure you clearly mark the contents of boxes. Unpack your essentials first - bedroom items, bathroom toiletries and the microwave! Contact the local Chamber of Commerce or Welcome Wagon to help you become familiar with shopping, schools and churches. (See the stress relieving tips in section 6.)

39. An illness of someone close to you can be difficult for other family members and compromise your health as well. It is important to take care of yourself if you are going to be of help to the loved one who is ill. Also, ask for help when you need it from friends, family, visiting nurses etc. Being able to share your concerns and fears with a trusted friend or relative can help ease the stress and hopefully the headaches, which you are experiencing. (See stress relieving tips in section 6.)
- 40 - 47. The feelings listed in this section could be related to stress and be the source of your headaches. It is important that you are able to understand what stress is and how *you* respond to it. Stress is what happens to our bodies as we react to our environment. At times, it is possible to exceed our capacity to deal with it. There are times when stress can have a positive effect on us by motivating us to take action. But the negative effect can cause us to feel angry, depressed and frustrated which can compromise our well-being and lead to health problems such as headaches. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another. Even if you realize that an event is stressful, you will differ in your psychological and physiological response to the event compared to other people. Studies have shown that many illnesses are related to unrelieved stress. If you are experiencing these symptoms, you need to reduce the stress in your life or increase your ability to deal with it. Stress will not go away on its own. You have to address it. What events cause you stress and why? How does your body respond to the stress? Can you change, avoid or eliminate the stress? Can you modify or reduce the intensity? Become aware of the stress in your life! The stress we experience is influenced by our perceptions. Use positive "self-talk" to help you keep things in proportion and minimize distortion. Sometimes we create a crisis in our mind by negative preconceived notions. Learn to recognize your physical reactions to stress. Take slow, deep breaths to reduce muscle tension and bring your heart rate back to normal. (See stress relieving tips in section 6.)
48. Computer monitors usually force you to tip your head up and down to see them. If you are over 40 years old, the monitor may be "blurry" also. If you wear a bifocal, you may need to exaggerate your head movements plus you may have to lean forward to get the words into focus. All of these actions may cause a headache. If you have switched to a different computer, the monitor may be higher or farther away than your prior one and that may cause your headaches. Try to adjust your computer monitor and/or chair or even get a lower desk so that it decreases your neck strain. If you wear bifocals, your eye doctor can give you reading glasses or raise your bifocal. Taking a "break" for 2 minutes and moving your head in circles and closing your eyes or looking at different distances may help to relieve the stress in your neck and eyes. If your computer screen produces reflections from windows,

rotating the screen to redirect the reflections or using a curtain on the window or putting an anti-glare screen on your monitor may help.

49. Let's use the process of elimination. If your headaches are due to one of those conditions, you should not get a headache on your day off. If you only get headaches at work, they are most likely related to one of those conditions or to other conditions which occur at work, but not at home, such as additional stress from your boss, co-workers, physical activity, or fumes etc. If it could be from stress at work, please see the tips on relieving stress in section 6.
50. To decide if this is the problem, if possible, try to use your old chair again and see if the headaches leave. If that is impossible, try to determine what the new chair does differently from your old one. If it makes your back more "rounded", try to get another chair which promotes better posture or use a pillow for support behind your back. If it makes you sit higher or lower, possibly adjust it or replace it etc.
51. Try rotating your monitor to decrease the reflections or glare. If the source of the light is a window, try putting a curtain over the window. An anti-glare screen for your computer monitor may also help.
52. A new hobby often involves new sources for headaches such as:
 - fumes from paints ex. painting models
 - using your eyes for closer viewing ex. cross stitching
 - noise from saws ex. wood working
 - physical movements ex. bowlingIf the headaches only occur after your hobby, try to eliminate the problem. For example, use earplugs if you use loud power tools, make sure there is ventilation if craft products have strong fumes, do close work at the distance for which your glasses were designed or go to your eye doctor and buy a pair of glasses, which focus at the distance you work on your hobby. They may recommend reading glasses vs bifocals so you will have a larger viewing area. (Reading glasses are less expensive than bifocals.)
53. You should ask the doctor who prescribed them if an interaction between the medications could cause your headaches. Make sure you are taking the proper dosage. Be sure to ask if you should take the medication on an empty stomach or with your meals.
- 54 –59 You should ask the doctor who prescribed them if this may be the cause of your headaches. When taking a medication, be sure to ask if you should take the medication on an empty stomach or with your meals.
- 60 - 61. Ask your pharmacist if they could be the source of your headaches. Be sure you are taking the proper dosage.
62. The headache diary will tell you the dates of your headaches. Compare that to the dates of your menstrual cycle to determine if there is a relationship.
63. Discuss this with your medical doctor and they will tell you if anything can be done to stop or decrease the headaches.

64. Heat is a common source of headaches. The headache diary will help you to determine if your headaches are related to when you are exposed to extra hot conditions.
65. If your headaches occur after being in a poorly ventilated area and they go away when you leave that area, they are possibly related. Caution - look for all other sources within the poorly ventilated area such as fumes, stress etc.
66. The headache diary will help you to determine if weather changes are related to your headaches. If your headache occurs after a weather change, always note that in the diary!
- 67 - 70. If you have experienced any of these weather changes, they should be noted in your headache diary. To determine if they are related to your headaches, your headache diary will show you if your headaches happened on the same day as these weather changes. If they did, you may try to stay inside more when these changes happen in the future.
71. If this is the source of your headaches, the headaches should decrease as you adapt to your new surroundings and as the stress from moving lessens.
72. Use your old perfume or deodorant again and see if the headaches go away.
73. To quickly determine if this is the source of your headaches, you may want to expose yourself to scented candles again. If the headaches return, you may be extra sensitive to certain odors. The headache diary will help you to narrow down which odors bother you.
74. If you only get headaches on the days, which you are exposed to the strong odors, there may be a direct relationship between the odors and your headaches. You can ask your co-workers if they are using a different perfume and even ask them to stop using the new perfume to help you to determine if that is the source of your headaches.
- 75 - 76. Skipping meals, dieting or irregular eating habits can cause headaches. If this is a possible cause of your headaches, begin eating healthy and at regular intervals to see if the headaches stop.
- 77 - 138. The best way to determine if a certain food or additive is the source of your headaches is to eliminate it from your diet and see if the headaches go away. A list of the foods, which most commonly cause headaches is shown in section four of the headache diary. Each time you have a headache, you should review all the foods listed in section four of this book and you should list the ones you ate prior to your headache in the headache diary section of this book - section seven.
139. Decrease your alcohol consumption and if you changed to a different type of alcohol, stop using the new type because it may contain something which gives you headaches. The headaches may not decrease immediately. It takes time for the alcohol and/or additives to leave your system.

140. Decrease your consumption of red wine since it is a common cause of headaches and see if your headaches decrease or go away.
141. Decrease your caffeine intake. Read the labels of your drinks and even your food. You can still enjoy most drinks since many of them are available in the decaffeinated form. Your headaches will not decrease immediately since it will take a while for the caffeine to leave your system.
142. Very cold drinks will cause headaches. It is similar to the headaches people get when they eat too much cold ice cream at once - be patient, drink and eat slower. Savor it!
143. MSG is a well known source of headaches. If you eat Chinese food, you can request that they leave the MSG out of it. Read the labels of all of your foods. Try to eliminate all MSG for 3 weeks and record if your headaches decrease or go away - they will not leave immediately since it will take time for the MSG to leave your system.
144. MSG is a well known source of headaches. It is sometimes found in flavor additives. Read the labels of all of your foods. Try to eliminate all MSG for 3 weeks and record if your headaches decrease or go away - they will not leave immediately since it will take time for the MSG to leave your system.
145. Seasonings and spices contain ingredients which you may be sensitive to so if you get a headache after eating a specific type of seasoning, avoid that seasoning for three weeks and see if your headaches go away.
146. If you have a headache after eating a soup, which is made from a bouillon cube, switch to another type of soup for three weeks and see if the headaches go away.
147. If you are pregnant, consult your medical doctor about your headaches.
148. If you just had a baby, consult your OB doctor or your medical doctor about your headaches.
149. Sudden changes in your routine may upset your body and result in headaches. Return to your prior routine for two weeks and see if the headaches go away.
150. Your headache diary will help to determine if there is a relationship between your headaches and your air travel. If there is a relationship, your family medical doctor may be able to make a recommendation.
151. Abrupt changes in your lifestyle may upset your body and cause a headache. Return to your old habits for two weeks and see if the headaches decrease or stop. Exception: If you recently stopped smoking, I cannot recommend that you continue to smoke since it has been proven to cause health problems. If your headaches are from decreased smoking, the headaches should gradually lessen as your system adjusts. Your headaches may not stop immediately since it will take time for some chemicals to leave your body.

152. Tense jaw muscles can be an outward sign of stress. Read section six of this book entitled - “Tips” on relieving stress” and also read section eight which contains additional methods to relieve stress or go to a stress counselor.
153. Diabetic's sugar levels sometimes fluctuate. If this happens, their vision will become blurry. A headache may result from either action. If you have diabetes in your family and you have headaches, you should have a fasting glucose tolerance test so discuss this with your family doctor. Then, you should be checked periodically. Your medical doctor will recommend at what interval you should be tested depending on which members of your family have diabetes and your age, weight, sex etc. (If you have diabetes in your family, it is extremely important for you not to become overweight.)
154. If you are hypoglycemic, you should check with your medical doctor. If it runs in your family, you should have it checked.
155. Bad posture compresses the spinal cord, which leads to the head, and can cause headaches. Bad posture can also cause a pinched nerve, which can cause headaches. It is always advisable to improve your posture but if your headaches persist, you should see a chiropractor.
156. If high blood pressure runs in your family and you have headaches, you should have your blood pressure checked and if it is elevated, you should give the readings to your family doctor to determine if this is the cause of your headaches. You should have it checked at least once a year thereafter. If your blood pressure readings are ever elevated, you should listen carefully to the advice of your medical doctor because high blood pressure is known as “the silent killer” because it can cause strokes and heart attacks and other very serious problems and you will not even feel bad. Even if high blood pressure does NOT run in your family, if you have headaches, it is always wise to check your blood pressure because your blood pressure may still be high.
157. The human body needs sleep and changes in your sleeping pattern may result in less total sleep or poorer quality of sleep and either may result in headaches. Other associated conditions may also occur such as depression, irritability, inability to concentrate etc.
158. Our bodies become accustomed to a routine and if we have any change in that routine our bodies may react in a variety of ways and one is to have headaches. To tell if this is the source of your headaches, return to your prior routine for two weeks and see if the headaches go away.
159. You should consult with your medical doctor and tell them how these activities affect your headaches.
160. Exercise is always good for you but if you are not used to it, you should check with your medical doctor before you begin any serious exercise program. A “couch potato” lifestyle is bad for you and may cause several problems including headaches.

161. Return to the doctor who fit you with the dentures. They may just need an adjustment.
162. Go to your family dentist and explain the problem and mention the headaches to them.
163. Your family dentist will tell you if they feel the problem is causing your headaches and they will also discuss your options regarding your overbite if you want it fixed.
164. An impacted wisdom tooth may be more serious than you realize and could be a cause of your headaches which you wouldn't consider. Check with your family dentist and they will tell you if they feel your wisdom tooth is the source of your headaches. It is always best to let them evaluate any impacted tooth occasionally so they can warn you if the tooth will need attention in the immediate future.
165. You should make sure that your posture is correct all day long. If your headaches continue, you should consult with a chiropractor.
166. Loud noises around your work or home can cause headaches. Has there been construction etc, going on around you which included loud noises?
167. If your sinus problems are minor, first try over-the-counter medications - your pharmacist may make a recommendation for you. If the problem is more serious, you should see your medical doctor. If it is severe, your family doctor will probably refer you to an E.N.T. doctor. (ear, nose and throat)
168. Taking inventory involves stress and eyestrain, which may produce headaches.
169. Fingernail polish and fingernail polish remover emit fumes which may cause headaches.

Section 6

Tips on “relieving stress”

It is important that you are able to understand what stress is and how *you* respond to it. Stress is what happens to our bodies as we react to our environment. At times, it is possible to exceed our capacity to deal with it. There are times when stress can have a positive effect on us by motivating us to take action but the negative effect can cause us to feel angry, depressed and frustrated which can compromise our well-being and lead to health problems such as headaches. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another. Even if you realize that an event is stressful, you will differ in your psychological and physiological response to the event compared to other people. Studies have shown that many illnesses are related to unrelieved stress. Most of us can benefit from reducing the stress in our lives or increasing our ability to deal with it. Stress will not go away on its own.

You have to address it. You have to determine what events cause you stress and why? How does your body respond to the stress? Can you change, avoid or eliminate the stress? Can you modify or reduce the intensity? Become aware of the stress in your life! The stress we experience is influenced by our perceptions. Use positive “self-talk” to help you keep things in proportion and minimize distortion. Sometimes we create a crisis in our mind by negative preconceived notions. Learn to recognize your physical reactions to stress. Take slow, deep breaths to reduce muscle tension and bring your heart rate back to normal. Points to remember:

- Know what stress is.
- Know what is stressful for you.
- Know how your body responds to stress.
- Lower or modify the stress.
- Increase your ability to cope with stress.
- Exercise.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Get adequate rest.
- Avoid excesses of caffeine, nicotine or other stimulants.
- Nurture friendships that are reciprocal and supportive.
- Set realistic goals.

If your responses to stress are more complex or intense i.e. withdrawal, prolonged depressive mood, inability to enjoy activities you once enjoyed, dramatic change in your sleeping habits or an inability to complete routine daily functions, you should seek the help of a professional. If you are unsure of how to determine whether you need additional help, speak with your family physician and he or she can advise you.

Section 7

Headache Diary

How a headache diary works

A headache diary will show if your headaches have a pattern, for example, do they only occur:

1. at work?
2. on the same day of the week?
3. after eating?
4. after reading?

When you fill out the headache diary, you will be aware of many possible sources of your headaches and you can document the ones you encountered prior to your headaches. Then you may notice a pattern, for example, every time I read for more than 15 minutes, I get a headache or every time I forget one of my pills, I get a headache or every time I have a deadline to meet, I get a headache.

If your headaches only occurs at work, then the diary will try to determine if it is due to using a computer, stress from deadlines, fluorescent lights, longer working hours or working various “shifts”, fumes, noises, smoke etc.

Another way, which a headache diary works, is best explained by an example. I had a patient who had a headache every week but at different times and on different days. I asked all the obvious questions but I wasn’t able to determine the cause of her headaches so I told her to keep a headache diary. Two weeks later, she called me and said, “My headaches are gone!” She worked in the office of a paint store and once a week, on different days, employees would carry paint through her office and the fumes were the source of the headaches. I would never have asked her, “Does anyone carry paint through your office?” but the headache diary helped her to determine the source of her headaches. **A Headache Diary may help to determine the cause of headaches which, may be missed by doctors - simply because doctors cannot follow you around all day like a diary can!**

Review all of the “possible sources” in section four after each headache and record your answers in the headache diary. (For accuracy, record your answers as soon after the headache as possible.) *You can use the same chart, for all of your headaches. Simply make a “check mark” after the No or Yes answer. (If you stop after your 5th headache, you will have a total of 5 “check marks” in your answer section.)* In the end, when you think you know the exact source of the headache, each time you come in contact with that source, make a “mental note” of whether you get a headache. If you do, congratulations, you are on the way to solving your headaches. The next step is to try to eliminate that source from your life or at least to reduce it as much as possible. If your headaches continue, we recommend you take this headache diary to a doctor for them to review it with you. If this book recommended a specific type of doctor, go to them. If it did not, begin with your family doctor.

You should also answer the following questions for each headache.

Headache # 1

Time it began: _____ A.M. or P.M.?

Time it ended: _____ A.M. or P.M.?

Where are they located? (One side of the head, across the forehead, back of the head, top of the head, entire head, different places at different times, both sides of the head?)

Day of the week: _____

If a #1 is a very slight headache and a #10 is the worst headache you could ever have, how would you rate your headaches? (Give a number from 1 to 10)

Type of pain:
(Dull, throbbing, stabbing etc.)

What medicine(s) did you take for the headache?

Did the medicine help the headache?

How long did the headache last?

List any possible sources of your headache which this book doesn't mention, such as in the example described previously about the lady who had paint delivered through her office on various days of each week.

Section 8

Conclusion

We hope that this book has helped you to solve your headaches or has directed you to the appropriate doctor or professional person who will be able to stop your headaches. Some headaches are of a mixed type, (several different types at once), and are harder to solve. Many headaches are due to the everyday stresses of life. Although it is not always possible to avoid all the stress in your life, this book gives you tips like, “don’t procrastinate”, “avoid deadlines” and “don’t take on more than you can do” but when you use all the “tips” and you still get a minor headache, there are additional methods, some conventional and some unconventional, which may be helpful and we would encourage you to try them because we really want you to be free of your headaches. Listed below are other possible medicines or techniques which you may want to investigate to look for a solution to your headaches:

Aspirin

acetaminophen

headache clinics

bio-feedback techniques

meditation

yoga

ice-packs against your head, sinuses or the back of your neck at the onset of the headache

massage therapy

acupuncture therapy

internet (there is a lot of information available via search engines on the internet)

There are some very new and effective drugs for migraines - please consult with your family doctor to determine if one of these recent drugs will work for you!

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- If you have a tip, which may help someone solve their headaches,
 - Please forward it to us and, if we use it in a future edition, we will put your name by your contribution if you wish!

Dr. Richard D. Smith
Founder of website5.com