

5 Steps to eliminating Headaches in Children

Mommy my head hurts! I am sure many parents have heard this phrase from their child. Forty percent or more of children by the age of seven have experienced a headache. By the age of fifteen, seventy-five percent of all children have also experienced a headache.

While no parent wants to see his or her child suffer with headaches, routinely giving an over the counter pain reliever is only a temporary answer. The human body displays symptoms for a reason. When a child continually gets headaches, the reason should be investigated. It is important to play detective and get to the underlying cause.

Certainly you want to rule out the most life threatening causes first such as a brain tumor or meningitis. Brain tumor headaches only show up in one out of 40,000 children. If your child has a headache accompanied by a high fever, lethargy, vomiting, neck stiffness, or difficulty walking you should seek immediate medical attention.

For those non-life threatening headaches such as tension headaches, migraines, or cluster headaches, you can look at other factors to help get to the cause of the headache mystery.

- 1. Check the Spine**—Children are subject to the vertebrae of their spines shifting out of alignment as much as adults are. When the upper vertebrae of the neck are misaligned or subluxated, it negatively impacts the muscles that attach to the base of the skull and also affects blood supply. These changes can trigger headaches. Gentle and safe manipulation by a chiropractor that specializes in treating children can help break the cycle and restore normal function.
- 2. Check the Cranium**—Since the bones of the skull/cranium move they can often make subtle shifts in their relationship with the other bones that comprise the cranium. This changes the fluid dynamics inside the cranium which can often manifest as a headache. Cranial Sacral practitioners can softly reestablish the normal movement.
- 3. Check the Gut**—Right near the appendix where the small and large intestines join is a valve called the ileocecal valve. It helps to regulate flow of bowel material from the small to large intestine. If the valve gets stuck or sluggish in its ability to function, it can cause what is known as a toxic headache. Gentle pressure applied to the area along with manual stimulation of associated acupressure points is often all that is needed to fix it.
- 4. Check for Allergies**—Food and environmental allergies can trigger headaches. I have seen milk allergies trigger headaches in children. Sometimes it is easy to avoid the offending substance; but if you can't avoid it, fixing the allergy is the solution.
- 5. Check the Mind-Body Connection**—Adults are not the only ones suffering from stress. Children can also experience mental stress in their lives. The mental

stress can trigger tension in the muscles which can lead to headaches. Working with a therapist to resolve emotional issues or teaching your child relaxation techniques such as meditation, can help remedy their headaches and give them valuable coping skills they can carry into adulthood.

Children should certainly not have to suffer with a lifetime of headaches. Getting to the cause early on can eliminate them falling into a pain cycle that can be harder to resolve when they grow into adults.