

Migraines and the Chiropractor's Touch

The pain of a migraine can be so searing you may as well drill a hole through your head. Then again this was the remedy of choice 3,000 years ago when [evil](#) spirits were thought to be the culprit behind migraines. While modern-day treatments have changed, the mystery behind the condition remains.

One popular theory: Migraines result from a chemical imbalance in the [brain](#). Often a trigger, such as certain foods or [hormones](#), can cause blood vessels to dilate in the brain. The vessels become inflamed, thus irritating surrounding nerve fibers. The nerve fibers then send messages back to control centers in the brain, which continues vessel dilation, thus kicking off a vicious cycle of violent pain.

There are plenty of [drugs](#) that combat migraines, though no magic bullet exists. Some studies, however, show that alternative treatments can complement mainstream medicine. A study from Northwestern College of Chiropractic in Bloomington, Minnesota, compared chiropractic manipulation with amitriptyline, an [antidepressant](#) commonly used to treat migraines. The study found that chiropractic healing was about as successful as the drug.

Chiropractors believe that some migraines originate in the spine. Often a misalignment of the vertebrae, or subluxation, can irritate the nerves that travel the length of the spine to the brain. This misalignment makes a person more prone to chemical imbalances in the brain. Some researchers say that realigning the vertebrae—a chiropractor's specialty—relieves the pressure against inflamed nerves and can in turn relieve the headaches.

For migraines caused by subluxation, chiropractors recommend gently stretching the neck—rolling and sudden movements should be avoided. To prevent subluxations, pay attention to your posture. For example, if you sit for long periods in front of a computer, move your body around frequently. Also, [sleep](#) on your side or back, and use a firm pillow that supports your neck.

For migraine pain that makes you want to put a hole in your head, put down that drill—and come see us at Wellness Chiropractic Health Center.