



Migraines

Why do I suffer from this nasty pain?

Juggling work, rest and play can place our bodies under stress. This stress can lead to some very debilitating symptoms; one being the dreaded migraine.

A migraine is a sharp, painful spasmodic headache sometimes with associated nausea, vomiting and visual disturbances. The pain can vary between moderate to severe, it tends to be of a pulsating and throbbing nature and is often felt behind one eye.

A traditional Chinese medicine take

Unfortunately migraines are not easily treated by Western medicine. The cause can be very difficult to ascertain, which means strong pain relief medication and tucking yourself into bed can be your only options - not so helpful if that report is due or the kids need to get to school.

The traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) approach is not to generically place all migraines in the same basket. TCM recognises that we all have individual body patterns.

Our body patterns represent the state of our internal energy. In TCM this energy is referred to as Qi and is our constitutional health. Qi flows through the body in different channels or meridians towards the head and limbs.

Qi Deficiency

Migraines can occur when our Qi becomes deficient or weak. Deficiency can be caused by factors such as long working hours, partying or restless sleep. The pain will generally be brought on by a busy period. Someone with a deficient Qi pattern will have low energy, appear pale and often feel the cold. With a “deficiency migraine” you may feel like lying down in a darkened room.

Qi Stagnation

Emotional stress can block and stagnate the flow of Qi. A “stagnation migraine” is a sharp pain often originating in the neck or shoulders and you can literally feel the pain trace along a channel and finish behind an eye. This migraine can be associated with sensations of heat and agitation.

How to treat the untreatable pain

Ok, it's important to remember whether or not you have Qi stagnation, deficiency - or a combination of both - that the imbalance needs to be addressed to treat the migraine. TCM will harmonise the body, strengthen the Qi and clear the stagnation.

Muscular skeletal aches and stiffness can often be a pre-cursor to migraines. To keep Qi moving, get some exercise, stretch, swim, go to the gym - whatever it takes. **Massage, mobilisation and acupuncture** are all very effective to ease muscular pain and free up stagnant Qi.

For those who suffer migraines frequently, **Chinese herbal medicine** will help enormously. Prescribed herbs will help promote a change in the body. In just a short period of time herbs can provide wonderful long term relief.

Tricks to beat the thump

- If you feel exhausted, get some **rest** and drink some **water**. Sit or lie in quiet place and let the world rush around you.
- For tension headaches try draping a **heat bag** around the neck and shoulders. Use some **liniment** at the base of the skull and the temples.
- The most useful **pressure point** for migraines and headaches is the small muscle between the thumb and forefinger. Press and hold this point firmly for up to two minutes.
- If during a migraine you feel hot and appear to perspire around the head, try **soaking your feet** in warm water, it will help draw the energy away from your head.