

COLUMN

June is Migraine and Headache Awareness Month

For most headache/migraine sufferers it often seems as though there are only 2 options: 1. Suffer in silence with a bottle of Motrin or 2. See your physician for a stronger medication that may or may not work. Although 47 percent of the adults in the U.S. experience headaches annually, migraines and other headaches are poorly recognized and inadequately treated. Many people live their daily lives with severe headaches or facial pain without any relief. Some are dependent on serious medications and narcotics affecting their health, judgment, and overall quality of life. With an estimated 37 million Americans living with chronic headaches/migraines, chances are you or someone you know is dealing with this problem right now. Unfortunately, many people have been treated by numerous physicians throughout their lives without any improvement in their symptoms. The last person most people would turn to for a cure would be their dentist; however your bite could be the cause of your chronic headaches.

Many headaches can be part of undiagnosed Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) disorder or an abnormal bite. Other symptoms common to headache sufferers are ear pain and congestion, ringing in the ears (tinnitus), dizziness and even neck tension or pain. The majority of these headaches are considered "muscle tension headaches," and can be directly related to a person's bite. If the jaw is misaligned, your muscles are strained trying to keep your jaw in its proper place. Over time, this strain can start impacting all the surrounding muscles including your head, neck and back. This syndrome is the source of chronic pain for many, and can result in severe wear, or fracturing, of your teeth and restorations, leading to tooth loss. This vicious cycle results in an

even more unbalanced bite causing a person's headaches and pain to worsen over time.

Common Signs that can lead to headaches and migraines:

- Premature tooth wear
- Tooth loss
- Teeth clenching grinding
- Tooth pain/sensitivity
- Limited opening of the jaw
- Clicking or popping of the jaw joints
- Neck pain

Approximately 90 percent of people in the world have poor bites; luckily most people can adapt throughout life with little or no discomfort. However, some people are not able to accommodate and are thrown into a pain spiral at some point in their life. If a person has had extensive dental work, is a severe clencher or grinder, or has missing teeth, it can have a significant effect on the surrounding facial muscles and joints which can lead to discomfort and pain.

How can my migraines or headaches be treated?

Thankfully, there is hope for people who are suffering from a "destructive" bite that doesn't involve surgery or medications. Depending on a dentist's training and experience in this area, they should be able to determine if a patient has a poor bite through a thorough exam and precise measurements. Some dentists will then treat the patient themselves or refer them to another dental professional that focuses on TMJ treatments. Our office has extensive training in neuromuscular dentistry which addresses a person's unbalanced bite and relieves their daily headaches, migraines, and other related symptoms. We have been successfully treating TMJ patients for almost 15 years in predictable and very conservative ways. With the help of specialized computer monitoring equipment we are able to identify which muscles are being

affected and track their improvement. This makes people very comfortable with pursuing this treatment when they are confident they will benefit from it. Seeking treatment now will improve the outcome, decrease treatment time, and avoid the probable risk of symptoms increasing. About 14 million Americans live with a form of chronic daily headache. If you have not found the relief and help that you deserve, being evaluated for an underlying bite issue neuromuscular dentistry could be answer you are looking for.

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For more information, visit www.rochesteradvanced-dentistry.com.



Dentally Speaking
by
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