

# Headache: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Gradual onset of a mild, steady, or dull aching in the head  
Pain often described as viselike squeezing or heavy pressure around head  
Constant headache (does not throb)

## QUICK REVIEW

- A tension headache is usually caused by tightening in the muscles of the face, neck, or scalp as a result of stress or poor posture.
- The first therapeutic goal in treating the chronic tension headache sufferer is to address any structural problem that may trigger a tension headache. Learning how to relax and defuse tension goes a long way in the treatment and prevention of tension headache.
- Migraine and tension headaches share many features.

## TREATMENT SUMMARY

The primary therapy should be addressing the factors that trigger tension in the neck muscles. Since the neck is an area of the body that often holds tension produced by psychological stress, it is especially important to learn to relax neck muscles through techniques such as progressive relaxation. In addition, it is important to address any structural factor that may be triggering tension headaches. Bodywork is an important consideration. Since tension headaches and migraine headaches share several features, the therapeutic recommendations given in MIGRAINE are appropriate here as well.

## Nutritional Supplements

- Magnesium: 250-400 mg three times per day
- Vitamin B6: 25 mg three times per day
- 5-HTP: 100 mg three times per day