

SURREY HEADACHE SERVICE

CHRONIC DAILY HEADACHE

Chronic daily headache is defined as any headache syndrome affecting more than half of the month, i.e. 15 days or more per month.

Some sufferers of this condition have also had migraine for many years, but their migraine has up-graded to become a chronic daily headache (CDH), with headache now affecting the majority of the month. Other sufferers have never had migraine before.

Many people awake every day with a headache. It is also possible to have exacerbations of this headache several times a month, which may have some of the features of migraine, such as nausea and sensitivity to light and sound.

There are three main treatments for CDH:

1. Physical measures

Physical measures, such as **physiotherapy** to the neck. Many people with CDH have restricted neck movement, sometimes due to a previous injury, such as a whiplash injury.

There are also some exercises, which you can try on your own at home in order to loosen your neck muscles. Do each of the following movements 10 times twice each day, morning and evening:

- Put your chin on your chest and then move your head backwards so that you are looking at the ceiling (do not over extend the neck backwards).
- Put first your left, then your right ear onto the equivalent shoulder.
- Slowly turn your head so that you are looking as far left as possible, then turn it 180 degrees so that you are looking as far right as possible.

You can also try using hot and cold treatments on your neck muscles, such as a covered hot water bottle, microwave hot pack or ice pack, both before and after the above exercises.

2. Botox and Greater Occipital Nerve Injections

BOTOX (private prescription only) - If diffuse symptoms.

GREATER OCCIPITAL NERVE INJECTIONS – If localized at back of the head, usually one sided.

3. Drugs

Drugs can also be very helpful in improving this condition.

5HTP – available from health shops.

Antidepressants – **NORTRIPTYLINE, AMITRIPTYLINE and PROTHIADEN (or Dothiepin).**

Antiepileptic – **EPILIM (or sodium valproate) and TOPIRAMATE.** These drugs are used in smaller doses to treat CDH.

Antiepileptic /Antineuropathic Pain – **GABAPENTIN/ PREGABALIN**

One problem with this type of headache is that some people become dependent on painkillers. As the painkillers wear off, there is a rebound headache, so the sufferer will take more tablets, and the painkillers are fuelling the headache. This is a very difficult cycle to break and many even require admission to hospital and thus is best avoided.

Botox therapy is also now available for this condition.

Useful contact:

Migraine Action Association
01536 461333

www.migraine.org.uk

www.migraine4kids.org.uk

Dr. Andrew J. Dowson
MB.BS Lond. PhD.
Tel: 01483 450755
Fax: 01483 456740
E-mail: dr.dowson@btconnect.com

Surrey Headache Service
Merrow Park Surgery
Kingfisher Drive
Guildford
Surrey
GU4 7EP
www.surreyheadacheservice.co.uk