

Migraines and Hormonal Imbalance

How they relate to hormones

Overview

A migraine is a vascular headache that involves the excessive dilation or contraction of the brain's blood vessels. Common and classic are the two types of migraines. Slowly the common migraine, produces a throbbing pain that may last for two to seventy-two hours. Often centered at the temple or behind one ear, the pain is severe. Alternatively it can begin at the back of the head and spreads to one entire side of the head (the word "migraine" comes from the Greek hemikrania, which means "half a skull").

Nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, and tingling and numbness in the limbs that can last up to eighteen hours usually accompanies a migraine.

A classic migraine is preceded by a set of symptoms referred to as an aura, which can consist of speech disorder, weakness, and disturbances in the senses of vision and/or smell.

Causes of Migraine Headaches

One factor behind higher incidence of migraines in women may be fluctuations in the level of the hormone estrogen. Around the time of menstruation, when there is hormonal imbalance, women typically get migraines. Any number of things can trigger a migraine in a susceptible individual, including

- allergies,
- stress,
- constipation,
- too much or too little sleep, l
- iver malfunction,
- emotional changes,
- sun glare,
- hormonal changes,
- flashing lights,
- lack of exercise, and
- changes in barometric pressure.

Dr. John Lee states that low blood sugar is frequently associated with migraines and studies have shown that blood sugar levels are low during a migraine attack, and the lower the blood sugar level, the more severe the headache. Dental problems may also be a factor.

Smoking can cause an attack because the nicotine and carbon monoxide cigarette smoke, affects the blood vessels – the nicotine constricts them while the carbon monoxide tends to expand them. Foods may also precipitate an attack. Some of the most common offenders are chocolate, citrus fruits, alcohol (especially red wine), and any food that is pickled, cured, aged, fermented, yeasty, or soured.

Natural Progesterone Cream and Migraine Headaches

Transdermal application of topical progesterone immediately at the onset of a headache, has successfully aborted significant numbers of migraines. A suggested

amount is up to 1 teaspoon of progesterone cream. This simple and often effective treatment is worth trying with most female migraine sufferers.

Migraine headaches that occur with regularity in women only at premenstrual times are most likely due to estrogen dominance. Estrogen causes dilation of blood vessels, and thus contributes to the cause(s) of migraines. Dr. John Lee states that one of the many virtues of natural progesterone is that it helps restore normal vascular tone, counteracting the blood vessel dilation that causes the headache. He states that once again, progesterone is safe and treats the cause in a normal, physiologic way. The more dangerous pharmaceutical drugs can be reserved for the rare case that does not respond completely to progesterone.

Menstrual Migraine Linked To Magnesium Deficiency

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) May 17 - Women with menstrual migraine have a high incidence of ionized magnesium deficiency and elevated ionized calcium/ionized magnesium ratio, confirming the hypothesis that ionized magnesium is involved in the development of menstrual migraine, researchers report.

Dr. Burton M. Altura and colleagues, from the State University of New York at Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, prospectively studied 61 women who had menstrual migraine. The researchers measured ionized magnesium, total magnesium, and ionized calcium, and calculated the ionized calcium/ionized magnesium ratio. During menstrual migraine, 45% of the women had an ionized magnesium deficiency compared with 15% during nonmenstrual migraine and 14% during menstruation without migraine. Between menstruations and during times when there were no headaches, 15% of the women had an ionized magnesium deficiency, the investigators found.