

PROACTIVE HEADACHE NEWSLETTER

Advancing Headache Relief Through Science and Clinical Care

Understanding the Root Causes of Headache Pain



"Hidden spinal injuries and ligament instability are among the most common—but least recognized—causes of chronic headaches."
— Dr. Nate Burdash, D.C., FPSC(C)

Overview

Headaches are among the most common yet misunderstood health conditions, affecting nearly one in four adults in the United States. While most treatments focus on symptom management, Proactive Healthcare specializes in identifying and treating the underlying structural and neurological causes that drive chronic and recurrent headaches. **Our patients often experience a 90–95% reduction in headache frequency and intensity.**

Common Types of Headaches

- Tension-Type Headaches – Often linked to muscular tension and postural strain.
- Cervicogenic Headaches – Originating from neck dysfunction, ligament injury, or joint irritation.
- Migraine – A neurological condition involving vascular and sensory hypersensitivity.
- Post-Traumatic Headaches – Common after motor vehicle collisions or concussions.

The 4 Most Common Headache Types



Tension Headache

Feels like a tight band around the head. Often due to muscle tension or poor posture.



Migraine

Throbbing, often one-sided pain, may include nausea or light sensitivity.



Cervicogenic Headache

Starts in the neck or base of the skull and radiates upward.



Post-Traumatic Headache

Can appear days or weeks after a car crash or concussion.

Underlying Structural Causes

Many chronic headache sufferers have undiagnosed ligament laxity in the cervical spine. When stabilizing ligaments are overstretched or injured—commonly from whiplash or repetitive strain—the body responds with protective muscle guarding. This creates

persistent tension, facet joint irritation, and nerve sensitivity that radiate pain into the head, neck, and shoulders.

HERE IS A LIST OF SYMPTOMS CAUSED BY PREVIOUS LIGAMENT INJURES



Do you or anyone you know suffer from any of these symptoms?

Set up an evaluation

The Three Main Spinal Injuries Behind Chronic Headaches

Even mild trauma or repetitive strain can damage multiple structures in the neck at once. The three most common injuries we identify in chronic headache patients are:

1. Ligament Injuries (Cervical Instability)

When the stabilizing ligaments of the neck are overstretched or torn, the spine loses its normal support. This micro-instability forces muscles to overwork and guard, creating chronic tension, inflammation, and nerve irritation that radiates into the head and shoulders.

2. Facet Joint Injuries (Facet Arthropathy or Edema)

The small joints that guide spinal movement—called facet joints—can become inflamed or develop swelling (edema) after trauma. These irritated joints often refer pain into the back of the head and upper neck, a common pattern in cervicogenic headaches.

3. Disc Injuries (Tears or Herniation)

The cervical discs act as shock absorbers between vertebrae. When injured, the disc fibers can tear or bulge, leading to pressure or chemical irritation of nearby nerves. This often results in neck stiffness, radiating pain, and recurrent headaches.

When these injuries are left untreated, the nervous system stays in a constant state of tension and inflammation—fueling ongoing pain cycles and chronic headaches.

[Click Here](#) to view our booklet that explains these injury patterns in more detail

Clinical Focus: Diagnosing the Hidden Causes

At Proactive Healthcare, we combine advanced imaging, biomechanical assessment, and manual examination to detect subtle injuries that traditional tests often miss. Flexion–extension X-rays, MRI studies, and computerized motion analysis can reveal micro-instability, facet edema, and disc or ligament injury patterns contributing to headache pain.

Modern Treatment Approach

Our multidisciplinary approach integrates manual therapy, spinal stabilization, neuromuscular re-education, and active rehabilitation. We also coordinate care with pain management and neurology specialists to ensure that each patient receives a comprehensive and medically defensible treatment plan. Objective data from imaging and motion studies guide progress and long-term stability outcomes.

Treatment Spotlight

- Motion-Based Ligament Evaluation – Identifies and measures spinal instability.
- Neuromuscular Re-education – Restores balanced muscle activation and posture.
- Manual and Instrument-Assisted Adjustments – Improves spinal mobility and reduces tension.
- Home and In-Clinic Rehab – Builds stability through targeted exercises and traction systems.

Patient Corner: Understanding Your Headaches

Not all headaches are the same. Recognizing your specific pattern is key to finding relief. Our upcoming blog series will cover the most common types of headaches, their underlying causes, and practical strategies to manage them.

Blog Preview: The 4 Most Common Headache Types

1. Tension Headache – Feels like a tight band around the head. Often due to muscle tension or poor posture.
2. Migraine – Throbbing, often one-sided pain, may include nausea or light sensitivity.
3. Cervicogenic Headache – Starts in the neck or base of the skull and radiates upward.
4. Post-Traumatic Headache – Can appear days or weeks after a car crash or concussion.

Stay tuned for our upcoming educational blogs and short videos, which we'll share via text and email. Each will include simple advice and tools to reduce pain and prevent future episodes.



“If headaches are impacting your daily life, schedule a consultation today. Our team will help uncover the root cause and design a plan for long-term relief.”

PROACTIVE HEALTHCARE — Diagnosed and Treated at the Source

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