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**Cluster Headaches
Rare, But Severe**

Cluster headache is a very severe form of primary headache occurring in about 1 percent of the population. Like migraine, cluster headaches have been classified as vascular headaches. The intense pain is caused by the dilation of blood vessels, which creates pressure on the trigeminal nerve (the fifth cranial nerve, emerging directly from the brain stem). While this process may be the immediate cause of the pain, the underlying cause(s) is not fully understood. Current scientific thought is that cluster headaches are related in some way to the release of histamine or serotonin.

Cluster headaches are distinct from migraine and tension-type headaches on several levels:

- Attacks occur in clusters or periods, with weeks or months between new cluster periods; remission periods may be months or even years; 10-15 percent of patients do not experience long periods of remission.

- Most cluster headache sufferers are men, with onset between ages of 20-40 (where more women suffer from migraines, with onset following the start of menstruation).

- Attacks are characterized by sharp, boring, severe, one-sided pain that is around the eye or along the side of the head and develops rapidly over minutes; pain usually presents on the same side during a series of attacks; pain can occur on the opposite side when a new series starts.

- Headache attacks last from 15-180 minutes and occur once every other day to up to eight times daily.

- Pain is localized behind the eye or in the eye region and may radiate to the forehead, temple, nose, cheek, or upper gum on the affected side.

- Attacks are associated with excessive sweating, flushed face, tearing, nasal congestion, runny nose, forehead and facial sweating, drooping eyelids, or eyelid swelling on the affected side.

- During an attack, patients may be restless or agitated due to excruciating pain.

- During a cluster period, attacks may be provoked or triggered by substances that cause blood vessel swelling such as smoking, alcohol, or selected drugs like histamine or nitroglycerin. Bright lights, stress, or certain foods may also trigger an attack.

The degree of pain involved in cluster headaches is markedly greater than in other headache conditions, including severe migraines. Cluster headaches can be a severely disabling disorder when patients suffer from bouts of pain from 2-20 times a week during a cluster series.

Migraine Headaches

Migraine headaches are less common than tension-type headaches. Nevertheless, migraines afflict about 28 million people in the US alone. As many as 6 percent of all men and up to 18 percent of all women (about 12 percent of the population as a whole) experience a migraine headache at some time. Roughly three out of four migraine sufferers are female. It is important to recognize that children also get migraines, and it affects between 5-10 percent of children under the age of 18 years.

A typical migraine attack produces some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- moderate to severe pain, which may be confined to one side of the head (60 percent) or may affect both sides (40 percent);
- head pain with a pulsating or throbbing quality;
- pain that worsens with physical activity;
- pain that interferes with your regular activities;
- nausea with or without vomiting; and
- sensitivity to light, sound and smell

When left untreated, a migraine typically lasts from four to 72 hours, but the frequency with which headaches occur varies from person to person. You may have migraines several times a month or just once or twice a year. About one in five migraine sufferers experiences an aura prior to onset of a migraine headache. Auras are neurological symptoms that may occur before, during, and after a migraine. There are many different types of either visual or other sensory auras, and they may differ between attacks. When experiencing an aura, "you may:

- see sparkling flashes of light
- perceive dazzling zigzag lines in your field of vision



Moisture Yes - Snow No! Caitlyn and Zachary Cerritos, children of Lori and Jesse Cerritos of Robert Lee, enjoyed the snow earlier this month. Coke County received over 1.5" in most areas with some much higher totals over the weekend. However, this precipitation was only in the form of rain!

- experience slowly spreading blind spots in your vision
- feel tingling, pins and needles sensations in one arm or leg; and
- (rarely) experience weakness or language and speech problems

Migraines are considered vascular headaches, which involve dilation or swelling of the blood vessels in the head and scalp so that the normal pulsation of the vessels cause a throbbing type of pain. Still, the precise cause of migraine headaches is unclear. There seems to be general agreement, however, that a key element is blood flow changes in the brain. People who get migraine headaches appear to have blood vessels that overreact to various triggers. Migraines may be triggered by stress, food, environmental changes, or some other factor; however, the exact chain of events remains unclear. These events seem to be largely driven by the nervous system.

Migraine pain can be disabling- "with symptoms so severe, all you can think about is finding a dark, quiet place to lie down. Migraine pain can be excruciating and

may incapacitate the sufferer for hours or even days. Fortunately, management of migraine pain has improved dramatically in the last decade. If you've seen a doctor in the past and had no success, it's time to make another appointment. Although there's still no cure, medications can help reduce the frequency of migraine and stop the pain once it has started. The right medicines combined with self-help remedies and changes in lifestyle may make a tremendous difference for you.

Coke County Library News

The Coke County Library has added many new titles to its large print section.

More patrons are seeing (literally) an enhanced reading situation with the large print. Readers who want to browse large print should go to the right of the big room and look at the shelves on the left.

An advantage of large print books is the amount of print available on one page which allows for a more connected reading experience.

Young adults considering college might want to look at a reading list for prospective college students.

There are several lists on the internet. The Coke County Library maintains a large section of classic books that are mentioned on these lists.

Several genealogy information seekers were on hand Monday night at the library to learn what Fran Lomas had researched about the settlement and immigration and emigration occurring on the East Coast in the 16th and 17th centuries. She provided sources for family name searches using records kept during that time.

Library hours are Tuesdays, 8-12; Wednesdays, 8-4; Thursdays, 1-5; Fridays, 8-12. Call 453-2495 for information.

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