



HEADACHE, MIGRAINE AND OCULAR MIGRAINE

Many patients associate headache with ocular disease. However, this is rarely the case. Most brow-ache or eye-ache is referred pain from muscle contraction in the neck.

Migraine is a vascular headache. It tends to run in families and frequently starts in the early teen years. Migraine may cause visual symptoms including moving jagged lines, colorful displays, or blurred vision. This occurs because migraine headaches are caused by blood flow changes in the area of the brain that serves vision. Visual symptoms, when caused by migraine, are typically present in the vision of both eyes. A change in peripheral vision, or blacking out of part of the visual field, is possible. Migraine may be associated with nausea and vomiting. Also, Migraine may occur with only visual symptoms and no headache at all. Migraine or migraine symptoms should not suddenly start in the later years. If this occurs, it could be a symptom of other disease and requires evaluation and testing.

There are, however, several specific eye disorders which may lead to headache. Headache caused by eye disease will be associated with blurred vision, light sensitivity, and possibly pain with eye movement. Your eye examination in our office always includes a careful search for ocular causes of disease.

Headache caused by brain tumor is uncommon. It appears suddenly, progresses in intensity, and may be dependent on body position. Other neurologic symptoms are common.

Treatment of headache depends on the cause and we will advise you who will best be able to help. Although headache is usually not a symptom of ocular disease, we frequently encounter patients with this problem. We will help you to diagnose the cause and refer you to the appropriate doctor for treatment.

What is an ocular migraine?

Occasionally, the vascular changes that cause migraine headaches occur in the blood vessel that directly supplies the eye. In this case, the blood flow to or within the eye is temporarily occluded. This often results in a temporary, partial or complete blackening of the vision within one eye. An ocular migraine does not typically coincide with a headache at the time it occurs. Your doctor may order some tests to rule out other causes of obstructed blood flow to the eye.