TREATMENT STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS
FOR CHRONIC DAILY HEADACHE SUFFERERS

Tenets of Therapy:

• Appropriate diagnosis
• Define co-morbid conditions.
• Support of patient and family.
• Keep a headache diary of medication use, sleeping pattern, eating habits, and diet.

Nonpharmacologic Treatment Options:

• Eat regular breakfast, lunch, and dinner at roughly the same time every day.
• Consider following a “migraine avoidance diet.”
• Institute a diet plan that includes abundant non-citrus fruits and vegetables.
• Maintain regular sleeping habits, even on weekends and holidays.
• Home exercise program that includes general conditioning and neck exercises.
• Avoid excessive noxious sensory input.
• Consider physical therapy including heat, massage, strengthening exercises, and muscle toning.
• Normalize weight if necessary.
• Stress reduction techniques.
• Consider behavioral therapy.
• Stop smoking.
• Decrease alcohol.

Pharmacologic Treatment Options:

• Address sleep intolerance.
• Address depression and anxiety.
• Address unresolved issues, especially anger.
• Add over-the-counter medication or prescriptions as appropriate. Take no single medication more than 2-3 days per week except as a “bridge therapy.”
• Medication for nausea and/or adjuvant pain relief.
• Consider medications for withdrawal symptoms.
• Add preventive agents early.
• Specific abortive treatment.

Alternative Therapies:

• Magnesium therapy (200 to 1,000 mg per day).
• Riboflavin (B2 therapy) (200 to 600 mg per day).
• Relaxation regimen (such as massage, physical therapy, yoga, and meditation).
• Consider trigger point injections.
• Consider biofeedback or hypnosis.
• Consider botulinum toxin/Botox injections.

Treatment Chronology:

• Discontinue the offending medications.
• Analgesic “bridge” therapy for withdrawal period, commonly 2-3 weeks.
• Initiate preventive therapy.
• Appropriate abortive therapy for episodic headache types.