

The Orthodox Approach

The main treatment for migraine or cluster headaches is with drugs such as ergotamine, which constrict the blood vessels. Taken in the warning stage, they can stop a headache within minutes. But patients who have regular attacks may be put on a course of these drugs, whose side-effects include severe blood vessel obstruction and angina. Narcotics may be given to relieve the pain. The latest development is to use calcium channel blockers such as Nifedipine.

Treatment for tension headaches involves hot or cold compresses, relaxation or meditation, and simple pain relievers such as aspirin, acetaminophen or ibuprofen.