

Do Migraines Have You

By Michelle Solomon

At The End of Your Rope?

Awoman named Paula sits in a chair in a room in Dr. Edward Lichten's Birmingham office. It's a Saturday morning and she is holding her head in pain. She has yet another migraine and she tells the doctor no matter what she takes, nothing helps. Paula is at the end of her rope.

A migraine headache is a woman's disease, Lichten explains to her. Almost 80 percent of all migraine sufferers are women. Lichten knows when he asks Paula the question about when she first started getting migraines, her answer will be when she started her menstrual cycle as a young woman. Paula thinks back and, as if a light bulb was set off in her head, says yes, that's when she believes her headaches began.

Laura Bailey of Ypsilanti said she has been having migraines for as long as she can remember. "For my entire life. I can remember being 7 and 8 years old and having head pain. It got worse as I hit puberty," said Bailey. Bailey suffers from menstrual migraines. "For two or three weeks, I have these horrific headaches," she said. Two weeks ago, she said she had a "basic meltdown at work" because of a screeching migraine. "My boss told me that I had to see Dr. Lichten. I called immediately and was in his office a little more than an hour later," said Bailey.

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Lichten believes that treating migraines in women is to get to what's causing the pain, not just do something that will mask the problem. Migraine medications on the market and other over-the-counter migraine prescriptions don't really "fix" the problem, Lichten believes. "The more codeine, Tylenol, Aleve, Excedrin, caffeine, which is ingested, the worse the migraine becomes," he said.

Lichten believes using hormonal or physical therapy treatments will get to the root of the problem. After a battery of tests, he deciphers whether the patient may benefit from an anesthetic block or Botox. "There is a tried and true scientific method to 'cure' these maladies," said Lichten. Paula holds her head while Lichten administers an anesthetic agent into the base of her skull. The agent is comparable to the use of Novocain by dentists. She tells him after a few minutes that her headache has gone away.

Linda Bailey said the same treatment worked for her. "It basically broke the cycle of my headaches," said Bailey. Bailey, 38, is off of her pain medication for the "first time in years." After three decades of pain, she agrees that Lichten's idea of migraines being caused by hormonal fluctuations makes sense.

She also agrees that her migraines could be genetic. "My mom has them, too," she says. While Bailey says it's been only two weeks since she started her treatment, she's never felt so good. Her regimen also includes doses of magnesium, which supplies her with minerals her body is lacking. "If it stays like this, my life will have dramatically changed," said Bailey.

Lichten firmly believes that prescription drugs are not the answer. "Treat the cause and the symptoms resolve themselves in one to two months," he said.

For Bailey, being free from pills is a dream come true. "Dr. Lichten is the magic pill," she says.

Call Dr. Lichten at (248) 593-9999 or visit his Web site at www.USDoctor.com. His office is located at 180 E. Brown St., Birmingham, MI.



GRADUATE EDUCATION

University of Akron, Bachelor of Arts
Ohio State University College of Medicine, Doctor of Medicine
Ohio State University Hospital, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Diplomate Board of OB GYN

MAJOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

American Medical Association
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Surgeons
American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists
American Association for the Study of Headache
American Fertility Association
American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine
Board Member, American Academy of Anti-Aging Health Professionals



Edward M. Lichten, M.D.
180 East Brown Street • Birmingham
(248) 593-9999