Popping a pill, when it comes to putting a stop to migraines or other headache pain, that’s the first step that many people take. But if you’re concerned about how much over the counter medication you’re swallowing, there are other headache relief strategies to try, many as close as your kitchen. With the power of alternative medicine, and several simple home remedies, you can take control of headaches naturally.

“It is easy to become reliant on drugs, we all live in a fast-paced nation and there is little understanding when you miss obligations over a headache,” says Moshe Lewis, MD, a pain management specialist in Redwood City, Calif.

The next time you feel the pounding about to begin, try these 5 ideas to conquer headaches:

- **Acupressure**- Performed by a qualified practitioner, acupressure can bring relief for headaches and a variety of other pain-related conditions, says Lewis. Japanese research explains that acupressure may work by stimulating the autonomic nervous system, which is why it may have an impact on headache and related conditions such as chronic neck pain. Though recent studies haven’t been done, earlier research on 500 people with frequent headaches found that self-administered acupressure was helpful and worth trying because there are no negative side effects.

- **Ice**- Applying ice or a cold pack to an injury is an age-old home remedy for all types of pain, and it may do the trick for migraines and other headache pain, too. Wrap your cold pack in a thin cloth to prevent your head from becoming too cold and apply it directly to your forehead. Lewis suggests sticking to just 10 minutes an hour, as needed, to keep your whole body from getting a chill.

- **Warm Foot Bath**- Soaking your feet in warm water may seem counterintuitive to helping migraine pain. But from a relaxation perspective, Lewis says, it can sometimes do the trick for quelling head pain by taking your mind off it.

- **Dimmed Lights**- Sensitivity to light, or photophobia, is a common symptom for many people who wrestle with migraine pain. Simply relaxing in a low-light
5 Alternative Strategies for Headache Relief
Continued from Cover

Room can be helpful, straightforward advice confirmed in a recent French study that demonstrated how high-light exposure can worsen the symptoms of an ongoing migraine, while lower light helps relieve them. **Restorative Sleep** - Not getting a good night’s sleep is tied to many health problems, including repeated headaches. “Maintaining a good and consistent sleeping pattern is helpful,” says Lewis. “I can guarantee myself a nasty headache just by going to sleep too late, even when I sleep in the next day.” These quick tricks should work for the occasional pounding head. But if you’re constantly plagued by headache pain, and ginger or your grandmothers home remedy doesn’t work, Dr. Lewis suggests a visit to a headache specialist. “There are many different causes of headaches, some of which can be addressed without drugs,” he says.

Get Your Social Security Statement Online
Sarah Kim, Social Security Regional Public Affairs Specialist

If you would like to get a Social Security Statement, which provides estimates of your future benefits, it is now available online at www.socialsecurity.gov. “Our new online Social Security Statement is simple, easy-to-use and provides people with estimates they can use to plan for their retirement,” said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security. “The online Statement also provides estimates for disability and survivors benefits, making the Statement an important financial planning tool. People should get in the habit of checking their online Statement each year, around their birthday, for example.” In addition to helping with financial planning, the online Statement also provides workers a convenient way to determine whether their earnings are accurately posted to their Social Security records. This feature is important because Social Security benefits are based on average earnings over a person’s lifetime. If the information is incorrect, the person may not receive proper benefits. The online Statement provides you the opportunity to save or print the document for future reference, or to have handy for discussions with family members or a financial planner. According to the American Customer Satisfaction Index, users are giving the online Statement a score of 89, making it competitive with our other top-rated, best-in-government online services, such as Retirement Estimator and online retirement application. To get a personalized online Statement, you must be age 18 or older and must be able to
10 Warning Signs Your Older Family Member May Need Help
Printed with permission of Eldercare Locator, a public service of the US Administration on Aging

Changes in physical and mental abilities that may occur with age can be difficult to detect, for older adults and their family members, friends, and caregivers too. To help in determining when an older adult may need assistance in the home, the Eldercare Locator has compiled a list of 10 warning signs. Any one of the following behaviors may indicate the need to take action. It is also important to inform the older adult’s physician of these physical or psychological behavior changes. Has your loved one:

• Changed eating habits, resulting in weight loss?
• Neglected personal hygiene, including wearing dirty clothes?
• Neglected their home, with a noticeable change in cleanliness and sanitation?
• Exhibited inappropriate behavior, such as unusually loud, quiet, paranoid, agitated, or making phone calls at all hours?
• Changed relationship patterns, causing friends and neighbors to express concerns?
• Had physical problems, such as burns or injuries which may result from forgetfulness, or misuse of alcohol or medication?
• Decreased or stopped participating in activities that were once important to them, such as dining with friends?
• Exhibited forgetfulness resulting in unopened mail or missed appointments?
• Mishandled finances, such as not paying bills, losing or hiding money?
• Made unusual purchases, such as buying more than one subscription to the same magazine or entering a large number of contests?

For information and resources for older adults contact Information and Assistance at (800) 510-2010 or (510) 577-3530.

Get Your Social Security Statement Online
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provide information already on file with Social Security. In addition, Social Security uses Experian, an external authentication service provider, for further verification. You must provide identifying information and answer security questions in order to pass this verification. Social Security will not share your Social Security number with Experian, but the identity check is an important part of this new, thorough verification process. After your identity is verified, you can create a “My Social Security” account with a unique user name and password to access your online statement. In addition, your online statement includes links to information about other online Social Security services, such as applications for retirement, disability, and Medicare. For more information visit www.socialsecurity.gov/mystatement.
Wilma Chan has been a strong advocate for children and families for over 35 years. Assemblywoman Wilma Chan served as the first woman Majority Leader of the California State Assembly. She represented Oakland, Alameda and Piedmont in the State Assembly from 2000-2006. She authored many ground-breaking bills including making California the first state to ban toxic flame retardants and implement a no-lead standard in drinking water pipes and fixtures. Ms. Chan authored historic legislation to end the practice of hospitals overcharging uninsured and underinsured patients and to cover California’s 800,000 uninsured children. She won approval of $100 million to expand State preschool and fought successfully to maintain the state’s Master Plan for college student access. It was her bill that in 2010 blew the whistle on Anthem Blue Cross when they tried to implement a 33% rate increase in California. The national attention to this issue helped propel national healthcare reform victory. Prior to her election to the Assembly, Ms. Chan was elected twice as the first Asian American to serve on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors after completing a term on the Oakland Board of Education. As a Supervisor, Ms. Chan wrote the strategic plan to keep the County Medical Center open and formed the Alameda County First Five Commission (Every Child Counts). She implemented a citizenship program with the passage of welfare reform and formed the Alameda and San Leandro Youth Collaboratives. Ms. Chan holds a BA in history from Wellesley College and an MA in education policy and administration from Stanford University. She has two grown children and one grandchild. She served as the Legislator in Residence at UC Berkeley during the 2006-07 academic years and taught political science on campus for two years. In addition, served for four years on the California Medical Assistance Commission where she worked to assure timely access to hospital care for Medi-Cal recipients statewide. She has worked on healthcare reform projects in Alameda County, including an expansion of health services at the Peralta Community Colleges. She most recently served as Vice President for Policy at Children Now, a national children’s advocacy organization located in Oakland. She has received numerous awards including:
- Champion for Children 2006, Children’s Hospital
- Legislator of the Year, CA Optometric Assn (partial list)
- Hunger Fighter Award, CA Hunger Network
- Person of the Year, World Journal
- Best Newcomer, NASW
- Rising Star Award, CA League of Women Voters
- Top of the Class, CA Journal 2002
- Outstanding Public Service, Ca School Employees Assn
- Legislator of the Year, Oakland East Bay Democratic Club
- CA Freshman of the Year, American Assn. of University Women
- Paul Harris Award, Rotary International.
Senior Information

Slight Increase in SSI and CAPI Benefits This Year
As of January 2014, SSI (supplemental Security Income) and CAPI (Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants) benefits will increase due to the Federal cost-of-living adjustment. The maximum amount a qualified individual aged or disabled may receive will be $877.40 or $932.40 for those who are blind. The maximum amount for a couple aged or disabled will be $1,478.20, or $1,625.20 if both people are blind. If a residence has no cooking facilities, the amount could be higher. Residents in an assisted living facility also receive a higher amount.

SSI and CAPI benefits are reduced depending on additional income, such as retirement income, wages or pensions. However, the first $20 a month in Social Security benefits or other unearned income, is disregarded when determining benefit levels.

For more detailed information or for a personal consultation, contact your local Social Security office or call them at 1-800-772-1213.

Utilities Assistance Programs
The following brief summary lists programs that may help offset high heating or electricity costs. Specific income guidelines may apply.

The CARE program provides a monthly discount to PGE customers of their energy bills. For information and to apply, call PGE at 1-866-743-2273, or go to www.pge.com/care.

The Home Energy Assistance (HEAP) program provides financial assistance to reduce the cost of heating or cooling a dwelling. For specific information or to apply, call 881-0300.

The Reach program can provide one-time assistance with an overdue energy bill or when a shut-off notice has been received. Call Senior Information at 577-3530 for an access number in your area.

The Medical Baseline program can help when, due to a specific and documented medical condition, gas or electricity costs are increased. Contact PGE for an application. A doctor’s certificate is required.

Assistance with Tax Forms
If you are over the age of 60 or disabled, and need help completing Federal or State Income tax returns, trained volunteers are available from February through April 15 by appointment. Many Senior Centers and local library branches are tax assistance sites. You can also call the AARP Tax Assistance line at 1-888-227-7669 and enter your zip code to find a location near you. Their website is: www.aarp.org/money/taxaide.

As these appointments are in high demand, it is best to call as soon as appointments are scheduled, usually around February 1.

Call Information and Assistance at (800) 510-2020 or (510) 577-3530
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Area Agency On Aging
Advisory Commission on Aging
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Phone: 1-800-510-2020
Fax: 510-577-1962

We're On The Web!
http://www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/elders_and_disabled_adults/aaa.cfm