

Migraine Headaches

Quick facts about migraines

- Migraines are different from other types of headache such as tension or sinus headaches.
- They are not caused by another condition like muscle tension.
- Some people may have nausea or vomiting along with the headache. Other symptoms could include sensitivity to light, smells or noise or even blurred vision, tingling or numbness.
- Migraines are chronic which means they may continue for a number of years.
- Some people might rarely get migraines while others can have regular or even daily attacks.

Identify your migraine triggers

- Migraine triggers, things that can bring on a migraine, can be different from person to person.

- Keeping a migraine diary can help you to find out what your triggers are and can also help you to see if treatments are working.
- Common triggers include:
 - Hormone levels: menopause, menstrual period, pregnancy, contraceptives.
 - Food: missing meals, dehydration, MSG, chocolate, aged meats or cheeses, sulfites in wine, caffeine withdrawal.
 - Sleep: not enough or too much sleep, jetlag.
 - Environmental: heat, humidity, allergies, change in air pressure.
 - Stress: both good and bad stress.

Treatment

- Treatment for migraines works best if it is taken early on, when the pain is mild. This is usually 20 – 60 minutes from the start of a migraine.
- The goal is to be free of pain from a migraine within 2 hours without having side-effects from treatment.
- Medications:
 - Anti-inflammatories:
 - Ibuprofen and naproxen are available without a prescription.
 - Often suggested to take at onset of headache.



MEDICINE CENTRE
PHARMACY

- Acetaminophen:
 - Can be combined with anti-inflammatories or triptans.
- Triptans (prescription only):
 - Come as tablets, nasal spray, injection or dissolvable wafers.
 - Often combined with other treatments.
 - There are several types, you may need to try more than one.
 - Anti-nauseant medicine might also be required.
- If migraines occur frequently, you might benefit from taking a medicine daily to reduce the number of attacks you get. This is called prophylactic treatment.
- Preventative or prophylactic medicines are taken every day.
- There are a number of different types of medicine that can be tried.
- Too frequent use of any medicines can lead to a medication overuse headache, talk to your pharmacist or doctor if you have to use medicines more than 10 days per month.

You can help to manage your migraines with these healthy habits

- Try to sleep, eat and exercise on a regular schedule.
- Don't smoke and avoid second hand smoke.
- Avoid migraine triggers.
- Manage your stress.

Your Pharmacist can

- Discuss benefits and possible side effects of the different medicines and work with you and your doctor to help you get the most out of them.
- Support you with lifestyle changes to manage your migraines.
- Suggest ways to make it easier to take your medications regularly.

Find more great information and tools here

- HealthLink BC: <http://goo.gl/wAKQd1>
- Canadian Headache Society: <http://goo.gl/eclx54>
- Migraine Diary: <http://goo.gl/iQ8VFr>
- Migraine Treatment guide: <http://goo.gl/J9ZLa1>
- Headache Network Canada: <http://goo.gl/5SgGxx>

Notes: